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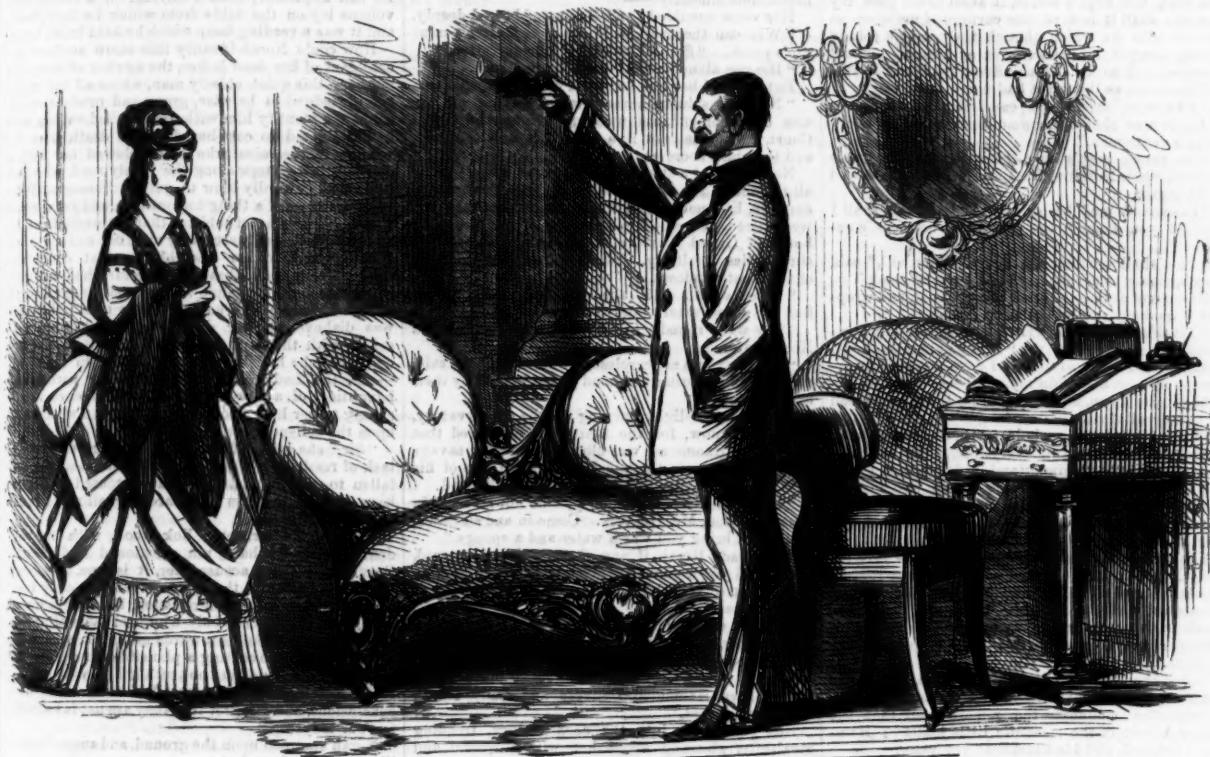
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GRAND COURT.

BY THE

Author of "Sometimes Sapphire, Sometimes Pale," &c.

CHAPTER VII.

Death is king and vice reg,
Dance a measure on the stones,
Madam—if I know your sex,
By the fashion of your bones. Tennyson.

NORAH looked down from the ruined window into the wood beneath—the distance was sickening, madening, awful beyond compare, and she tried to clasp the rough sides of the wall—strode with a despairing gesture to push herself backwards.

Her face was turned away from the murderous villain who held her, but she pleaded for her life in wild accents, through which vibrated the mortal fear of her young, innocent soul.

"Spare me, spare me—thou shalt do no murder" she said, in a hoarse voice, unlike her own.

Still the cruel hands held her, but they had not as yet, it seemed, nerved themselves to the effort of casting her down to death. Conscience, or remorse, or fear, or more likely still, the power of the great God in whom he believed not, may have stayed the hands of the villain—may have held him irresolute, with his clutch upon those slight, girlish shoulders. Pity he felt not, for its divine whisperings were never heard in his black and brooding soul; but he may have experienced a nameless dread, a half-formed fear of consequences, an indistinct idea that after all there was no such desperate hurry for the consummation of the horrible act he contemplated.

"Spare me," cried Norah, struggling desperately. The moon shone out brightly as she spoke, and showed her the deep fall, the steep sides of the ruined house, the rough ground at the bottom, all strewn with gnarled roots and stumps of giant trees, the long rank grass growing up among them.

Alas, merciful heaven! will that rank grass be saturated with her blood? Will the noble and beautiful young head come into frightful contact with those

[DETECTED.]

gnarled roots and giant stumps? A wild, despairing cry rang through the woods at the thought.

Suddenly Norah felt herself drawn back towards the ruined window—drawn back by powerful hands, then in another moment she was placed on the floor in a sitting posture.

Two men were struggling like maniacs in the room, one was her masked assailant, the other she did not at first recognise in the dim, uncertain light of the moonbeams. At last he spoke:

"Fiend, I will tear that mask from your face if I lose my life for it. Ah! you can wrestle, can you? Well and good. Hammond Danvers is a fair pugilist among his Oxford friends. I, too—I, too, can strike—so—and so—iron? an iron mask—are we back again in the middle ages. I will beat it in," and Hammond Danvers sent the full force of his clenched fist against the mask. It rang with the blow, but it resisted it completely; and a low laugh, such as one might have fancied Satan himself would have given utterance to, broke from the murderous wretch, who had attacked the Lady Norah.

But he never spoke, he only doubled, turned and closed with his adversary, laughing the while now and anon, the low, evil laugh.

Norah sat sobbing hysterically on the floor. It seemed to her that if the man gained the victory over her preserver, that her life would be in danger.

At last Hammond Danvers threw his enemy with a heavy thud on the ground, and the man lay as if stunned. Hammond stood over him a moment with clenched hands. The moonlight shone upon his noble, dusky head, and bathed his tall, athletic form in a sort of effulgence of glory.

The heart of Lady Norah stirred within her, while she looked at the princely proportions and grand, graceful bearing of her deliverer; and yet she had not been able to find voice to utter one word.

Danvers spurned the form of the ruffian with his foot.

"I will unmask you," he said, bending over him.

All at once the other dashed his fist with a sledge-hammer force into the face of Hammond, and caused him to reel backwards a few paces; then springing

to his feet, with a repetition of that horrible laugh, the miscreant rushed out of the room, and the two in the chamber could hear his heavy footsteps clamping down the stairs.

Hammond was rushing after him, when Norah called him back.

"Mr. Danvers," she said, "you will never overtake him in that wood, and if you secured him, what could you do? I must be brought before the world, I, Lady Norah Beaumont, whose father has not been dead one month, and the story of this escapade by night must be made public. I think the horror and shame of such an exposure would be second only to the death I was threatened with just now. Please to let that man escape, for in his escape lies my safety."

Hammond Danvers was penetrated with admiration for the Lady Norah Beaumont; pity, curiosity, the natural delight which he felt at having saved her life, all conspired to place her on a pedestal, where a lover might worship her at his leisure, and dwell upon her perfections night and day. A pedestal, because Hammond knew the pride of the Beaumonts; and he, the younger son of a poor baronet, with only about three hundred a year to call his own, felt that to raise his eyes to the daughter of the Earl of Monkhouse would be an intolerable presumption.

But with all the common-sense of these premises ranking in his mind, Hammond owned an affectionate heart, a warm and lively fancy, and a chivalrous disposition, which prompted him to love without hope of return; to sacrifice himself for the being whom he loved.

He went about the world meanwhile not as the knight with the sorrowful countenance, but as a busy, cheerful, active, young country gentleman; always the life of whatever society he entered (we speak of country society); the friend of the labourers, the patron of their curly-headed children, the comrade by turns of the clergy, the fox hunters, the sportsmen, and the merry young bachelors of the country.

He had admired—nay, loved—the Lady Norah

Beaumont, for a whole twelvemonth. She was his ideal of all that was loveliest, truest, and noblest, in her budding womanhood and girlish grace; but he had never dreamed of an opportunity like the present—an opportunity of rescuing her from death; being the sole confidant of her important secret, and holding a claim upon her gratitude, a claim which would form a link between them for life.

"That man shall escape, Lady Norah," said the young gentleman, bowing profoundly; "and since you wish this kept a secret, it shall never pass my lips, nor shall it lurk at the corners of my eyes, as some secrets do, which, though they are not told in words, are yet hinted away in actions, significant gestures, and so on. This adventure, Lady Norah, will be to me as though it had never been."

"I know it," said Norah, emphatically. "I am sure as I ever was that Hammond Danvers is in every sense a gentleman."

The young man's face glowed, and his frame thrilled, when Norah spoke those words. He bowed to her again.

"Command me," he said. "Lady Norah, shall I conduct you home? or—you have only to command."

"You shall conduct me home, if you will," said Norah, rising to her feet; "but I have no cloak."

Hammond at once took off his overcoat, and wrapped it tenderly around the Lady Norah.

"All this while I have not thanked you, Mr. Danvers," said Norah, slowly. "It is just because I feel so much that I, say so little. I dare not give utterance to all that is within my mind—"

She broke down, and wept, while Hammond stood by in respectful silence.

"I shall tell you the whole truth, the reason why I am out alone at night, everything," she said, extending her hand to him; "and in doing this, I give you a secret of my twin sister's—keep two instead of one; and, Hammond Danvers, if you choose to blame my imprudence, do so—I deserve it, and will bear it patiently."

The pulses of Hammond quickened; the love for Lady Norah hitherto curbed and coerced by reason, by his natural humility, and his unselfish nature, threatened while he held her hand, and heard her speak such gentle words, to outrun the bounds of prudence, and betray him into some unguarded expression.

Norah then told him of Lady Bateman, and Philip Ruthven; of Vlasi—the Italian organ man—the discovery—the coldness—the remorse—all that the reader knows of the romantic little history; Hammond listened, and his heart beat yet faster.

Then there was not such outrageous pride after all in these Ladies Beaumont? For Philip Ruthven was a young man of whom nobody knew anything, except that he was a clever fellow, honourable, penniless, and friendless. He, at least, Hammond Danvers, came of a good old stock. His ancestors had fought on the fields at Cressay and Poitiers: Penniston Grange was one of the finest places for old pictures, old armour, old manuscripts, old plate, and ancient jewellery, in the county. Hammond held his head up while he listened, and his hand tightened upon Norah's.

There came a chill; Lady Norah quietly, but decidedly withdrew her hand, and again the heart of Hammond sank to its former quiescent and patient condition.

"You must explain the miracle of my preservation, Mr. Danvers," said Norah. "How did you manage to mount these stairs in time to save me?"

"I recognised you, Lady Norah, as you crossed the hall at the rector's. I saw that you had a little accident with Mrs. Somers, and I understood how it was that none of the servants had been sent out with you. I followed you at a distance—there was no carriage; I thought it might have gone on. I followed still, saw you take the turn to the post-office and come back again. I was standing under cover of the hedge. When you emerged into the road you began to run, I still thought the carriage was ahead of you, and I did not wish to make the noise of running—I feared it would alarm you. I hung back; when a man, who was here just now, came from behind me and rushed after you at the top of his speed. I thought me ill; I imagined that it was perhaps one of the Grand Court servants. I therefore simply walked on at a good pace; but presently I heard the echoes of your light footsteps ahead of the man's, a turn in the road had brought you to that place, near the wood, where there is a great echo. I listened, and I heard fear in your footsteps—you were running at an enormous pace—unnaturally fast, and behind you the sound of that man's feet.

"Then, instinct whispered to me, that you were pursued! I ran, I know not how far; I had lost time—I ran after the pursuer, and then the first footstep ceased—I thought of the wood, as by an inspiration I remembered the ruined house. I entered

the wood, by this time in despair, so much time had been lost. As I neared the ruins the moon shone out—I saw you, Lady Norah, your lovely head—your head!—checking himself—"hanging downwards from the window, and I heard you say:

"Thou shalt do no murder."

"I prayed God to hold the villain's hand while I mounted the stairs. You know the rest."

"Accept my deepest gratitude, Mr. Danvers, my admiration for your courage, my—my faith in your honourable sincerity—"

Her voice trembled; and Hammond bowed deeply.

"Who can that man be?" he asked, after a minute's pause.

"Some London thief or garrotter."

"Heaven alone knows!" said Lady Norah.

But she had her one deep and dreadful suspicion.

"No," she said to herself, while leaning on the arm of Hammond, and wending her way to Grand Court, "we must not live with this new countess, and this dark secretary."

Norah was of a strong and vigorous constitution; all the shock, the fatigue, the suffering she had undergone, had not caused her to faint; but she felt weak, tired, nervous, when she approached the great house of Grand Court, after creeping through the shrubberies stealthily. There were lights in many of the front windows.

"What shall I do?" she said, helplessly, "if we find the conservatory door bolted?"

They went round; the door was not bolted, and Norah entered.

"The servants are careless, Mr. Danvers," she said, smiling, and offering her hand; "but I profit by their carelessness."

There was a light burning in the conservatory, and Norah, now, for the first time, perceived that the face of Hammond was bloodstained—the savage blow of the man in the wood had closed one of his eyes, and his beauty was for the time obliterated.

"Oh!" cried Norah, tenderly. "do not go away in that condition, Mr. Danvers. Come in and sit down, and I will bring you warm water and a sponge."

"No, Lady Norah, if any of the servants entered, how could you account for my being here?"

"It is not very late. Nobody is in bed—don't think of me."

"I must say something concerning a fight with a gamekeeper, who took me for a poacher; something I must say, unless I can doctor my face into respectability before the morning."

And then Hammond Danvers and Lady Norah Beaumont parted.

She passed on into the conservatory, treading stealthily, glancing about her with a fearful and timid eye. A dim light burned at the farther end, the air was heavy with the perfume of the flowers. Norah had disengaged herself of the warm overcoat wherein Hammond Danvers had wrapped her, and the dim light fell upon her dishevelled hair, her white silk evening dress, her eager excited face; a bright spot burned on either cheek, a strange fire glowed in her blue eyes; she had only just escaped from death, and instinct and reason both assured her that the would-be murderer, the masked ruffian, the pursuer, was none other than the sinister-faced secretary, the man who held the fortunes of herself and her twin sister in his unscrupulous grasp. Filled with these wild thoughts, meditating an escape from this dangerous foe, she passed from the conservatory into the back drawing-room, and crossed the thick carpet, without noticing that her walking boots made a noise. She was startled when a form rose from behind a writing-table placed in the corner, and to her intense amazement, Rokewood, the man who filled her thoughts, and from whom she shrank, as she would have shrank from a highway robber, stood before her, holding a small silver lamp in his hand. She recoiled with a low cry of terror, he raised the lamp higher, looked at her calmly, and exclaimed, in a tone of intense astonishment:

"Lady Norah Beaumont, eleven o'clock at night, and you have been wandering in the park—nay, young lady, no subterfuges, no excuses, no untruths. I heard the door of the conservatory open, I waited, believing it to be the gardener, who had forgotten something connected with the plants. I listened, the step came on, the door opened, the form, not of the gardener, but of my dear lord's daughter, the Lady Norah Beaumont, comes before me, with the stains of mud upon her dress, bonnetless, altogether unlike herself. This must be looked to, Lady Norah—this must be explained. By my late lord's will, I am constituted your guardian, and depend upon it, I shall exercise my rights of guardianship, in such a way as shall prevent a repetition of conduct, not only unladylike, but unfeminine."

The man, her accuser, stood before Norah calm as a statue, firm as a rock, impassive and relentless as a judge, while her proud blood boiled with indignation at his insolent assumption of superiority, his daring accusation, and his implied threat of tyranny

for the future. She felt herself at a terrible disadvantage before him—not a thread was out of place in his attire, which was that of the dinner costume of a gentleman in the most fashionable society—his grizzled hair and moustache were trimmed as if he had just passed from the hands of his valet. His black clothes were glossy with newness, and unflecked by the least dust. A large diamond pin shone on his white cravat—there was not the faintest trace of agitation on his sombre, dark countenance. He had apparently been studying, for a heavy folio volume lay on the table from which he had risen; and it was a reading lamp which he held in his hand.

How could Norah identify this stern student, the confidant of her dead father, the adviser of her dead mother—this quiet, elderly man, whom all the world acknowledged to be wise, grave and prudent—how could she identify him with the masked ruffian who had attempted to cast her down to death from the window of the ruins, who had followed her with a murderer's footsteps along the lonely road, who had dealt that cowardly blow to gallant Hammond Danvers? It seemed a thing impossible; and yet a voice within Norah's heart told her that the masked ruffian and the gentlemanly secretary were one and the same. Indignation held her speechless—what could she say? Every word that the secretary had uttered, regarding her appearance and her entrance through the conservatory was so far strictly true. Her hair was dishevelled, her dress disordered, torn and soiled with the mud of the road. She could not deny that she had been wandering out in the night—she, the Lady Norah Beaumont, by nature the haughtiest of a haughty race. All at once words sprang to her lips, and she turned round wrathfully upon the self-possessed secretary.

"Sir," she said, "I am sorry that the ungraceful task of reminding you of our different positions has fallen to my lot; but you have accused me, you have insulted me, you have dared to call me to order and to question me."

"Pardon," interrupted Rokewood, with his sardonic smile. "I have not questioned Lady Norah Beaumont—I have accused her, it is true, because I have seen her enter the house at an unseemly hour in the night, but I do not question, because it would lead to no result. The lady who is capable of prowling about the grounds towards midnight, would not be backward in inventing a plausible excuse for her conduct. I should hear no truth if I questioned you, Lady Norah; I am quite satisfied to form my own conclusions, and I regret that they are not favourable to your ladyship."

Norah stamped upon the ground, and anger flashed like lightning from her eyes.

"Sir, sir," she said, "this is unbearable—you go beyond yourself—you presume, sir. I will never condescend to give you the least explanation of my conduct; and I hold you, your opinions and your conclusions in the most utter and sovereign contempt. Perhaps I know more about you than you know about me," and she looked at him fixedly. "And if you purpose exercising any espionage over me and my actions, depend upon it, I will return that espionage with interest. You shall be watched, Mr. Rokewood; and as you have formed some peculiar opinions regarding me, permit me to say that I have arrived at some very remarkable ones concerning yourself."

Norah looked beautiful in her anger—she flashed as it were, like an accusing spirit before the gaze of Rokewood.

Despite his assumed calmness and haughty self-possession, the secretary quailed for an instant under the fire of Norah's eyes. He recovered himself almost immediately.

"You speak in enigmas, fair lady," he said, with a sarcastic smile; "but I am quite willing that you shall enrol me among the list of cruel guardians and uncompromising governors, with which, doubtless, your fancy is peopled. Depend upon it, for the next four years I will have no clandestine meetings in the park."

As he spoke he laid his hand on Norah's arm, and grasped it with a savage ferocity, at the same time that the smile never left his lip, and that he bent his head in apparent politeness and deference to the unhappy girl.

"You will oblige me," said the secretary, in a tone of icy civility, "if you will accompany me in your present costume, straight to the apartments of Lady Bateman."

"Let go my arm," replied Norah, in a tone of impetuous passion. "How dare you, how dare you, Mr. Rokewood?"

"I dare far more," replied the secretary, still speaking with his sardonic smile, "where the honour of a family is at stake, and where you have just given utterance to threats which menace my honour. It is necessary that Lady Bateman should see you, and the disordered state of your attire; it is neces-

sary that she be made to understand, and to believe my assertions respecting your conduct."

Norah struggled with all her might to free herself from the cruel grasp of Rokewood, but in vain. Humiliated to the dust, the proud Norah was forced by Rokewood along the carpeted corridors, along the marble hall, and up the wide, lighted staircases; they encountered now and then a startled domestic or so—Norah raised her head proudly, but her cheeks burned with shame and her whole soul vibrated with the passionate anger which she felt. A few steps more, and Rokewood knocked loudly at the door of Lady Bateman's private drawing-room.

"Come in," cried the lady, languidly.

Then Rokewood opened the door, and dragging Norah after him, approached the silken couch where Lady Bateman lounged, enjoying her evening coffee and confections and glancing over the pages of a newly-arrived magazine.

The lady was startled out of her well-bred repose of manner by the sight of flushed, excited Norah, with her dishevelled hair, mud-stained boots, torn dress, and that stern, sinister secretary, with his hand savagely grasping the girl's white arm.

"Why, Lady Norah, I thought you were asleep, hours ago," cried Lady Bateman, in a tone of surprise.

"Asleep!" cried Rokewood. "Dreaming, perhaps, some wild and imprudent love-dream, but not asleep. Nay, Lady Norah, do not interrupt me—you cannot gainsay one word of what I am about to utter. Lady Norah Beaumont has been wandering in the woods and in the roads up to this hour. I surprised her in the act of re-entering the house—some one or other of the pupils of that old rector has doubtless been her companion. I know what young men are. He will not fail to brag of the condescension of the Lady Norah, and before to-morrow night the name of the earl's daughter will be a byword among the villagers. I appeal to you, Lady Bateman. I appeal to your knowledge and judgment as a woman of the world, and I demand to know whether this girl should not be placed under the strictest surveillance—stricter, in fact, than any which your ladyship would care to exercise. I have hitherto left the choice of their residence to the two daughters of the late Earl of Monkhouse, whether they would live under your guardianship or under mine; but after to-night, I am resolved to take the reins in my own hands."

"Norah," cried Lady Bateman, "explain yourself; is this true?"

"It is true that I went out to-night, secretly and clandestinely," said Norah, speaking calmly; "but my mission was not a dishonourable one. I performed an act of kindness for another person, and that person's secret I shall not divulge—it is sacred. On my return I was pursued by a man, who attempted my life. I firmly believe that man to be the one who now grasps my arm so savagely."

"Ah, ah," laughed Rokewood, contemptuously, "what a romantic ending to a well got up story. I have no doubt your white silk dress and gold bracelets may have tempted some half-tippy ruffian to run after you."

"Norah, you distress me—you amaze me," cried Lady Bateman, clasping her hands. "This confession that you have been out, this refusal to say where, confirm the worst suspicions of Mr. Rokewood. Never was I more mistaken in any man than in your father, and now in you. I feel inclined to wash my hands of the whole affair."

Norah gazed at her *chaperone* in utter amazement. Only that very morning her mercenary ladyship had been most anxious to secure for her private purse the thousand a-year which Rokewood was to pay for the maintenance of the two daughters of the late Earl of Monkhouse; some change had taken place in the plans of the woman of the world. She sipped her coffee complacently, and placidly broke a piece of her sugared biscuit into it.

"I am quite a martyr to circumstances," said Lady Bateman.

"You understand, then, Lady Norah," said Rokewood, "that you and your sister from henceforth, owe to me and to Lady Monkhouse the most implicit obedience. From this night I am your guardian and Lady Viola's—a strict hand is needed."

"I would sooner die than live under your yoke," cried Norah, in vehement wrath. "I shall write to Colonel Claverhouse, to Lord Desmond. I shall speak of the mask you wore, and of your attempt to throw me from the *Ruins*."

Rokewood lifted his left hand in the air, while the grasp of the right tightened upon the arm of Norah. A wicked smile curled his lip with its grizzled moustache—a sardonic leer looked out at the corners of his eyes. A painter would have coveted the countenance as a model for the head of Satan.

"To throw you from the *Ruins*," he cried; "and have you been to the *Ruins*? I had no idea that

Lady Norah's wanderings had extended so far. More imprudence, you perceive, Lady Bateman, than I had given her credit for even."

"The *Ruins*," echoed Lady Bateman. "The *Ruins*!" and the punctilious dame staredaghast.

She paid no heed to Norah's accusations. She did not appear to consider whether her life had been in danger or not; her eyes were only open to one palpable fact—her pupil, her charge had been wandering in the *Ruins* by moonlight, accompanied by some young man—and the death of the daughter of Lord Monkhouse could hardly have appeared more shocking in her sight.

"I cannot consent to talk to you any more, Lady Norah," she cried; "you are condemned on your own confession. I will never be *chaperone* again to any grown-up girls. Pray retire; my nerves are not strong enough for these encounters."

Then Rokewood dragged Lady Norah hastily across the room, down the stairs, along a corridor, and rapping at the door of her own chamber, he called out:

"Lady Viola, here is your sister, just returned from a midnight ramble in the *Ruins*, with one of the rector's pupils. Take care of her, for it strikes me, she is not overgifted with prudence."

Lady Viola opened the door, and stood as pale as a statue before her sister and Rokewood. The latter released his hold of the arm of Norah, and giving her a slight push, closed the door after her, turned the key in the lock, took it out and put it in his pocket; then turned his steps towards the south wing and the apartments of the countess, his niece.

CHAPTER VIII.

King John: Death.

Hubert: My lord?

King John: A grave.

Hubert: He shall not live.

King John: Enough; I could be merry now.

Shakespeare.

ROKEWOOD strode along the passages, corridors and staircases, with the air of a man who is perfectly master of the situation. The south wing was gained, and soon he stood within the private boudoir of his niece. This was a smaller apartment than the room with the raised dais of green and gold. It was a gorgeous, eastern-looking boudoir. A window, painted in the richest hues, representing a vintage in France, looked into a conservatory, where the rarest flowers were in bloom. The carpet was like a *parterie* of the gayest flowers, and was of the costliest material. The chairs and couches were of green satin, worked in bouquets with silks and gold thread; the large vases of Sévres, the satin hangings, all the ornaments of this brightly-tinted boudoir glowed and glittered with the same device—flowers, flowers everywhere.

A fire burned in the low grate, and the Countess of Monkhouse lounged upon a couch in front of it. The subtle perfume of a cigar pervaded the whole apartment. Lady Monkhouse had cast off her robes of crape, and was habited in a long, crimson dressing gown of silk, the satin embroidered with gold. Her jet black hair hung loosely upon her shoulders, it was heavy and glossy—there was a glow upon her face, and her large eyes sparkled as she turned them upon Rokewood.

"Well," she said, "well, shut the door, my brave uncle; lock the door, make all safe. In the room beyond the conservatory, a supper is laid, and we will go in there and partake of it, as soon as you will tell me the news."

"This is not an agreeable house in which to tell secrets," muttered Rokewood. "There are so many passages; and room open into room; and listeners may be behind walls—every window is shadowed by curtains of velvet or satin, thick enough to roof a house in with—"

The countess replied by a mocking laugh.

"Search about," she said, gaily; "lift up the curtains; look under the tables; pass into the other rooms. I have made all safe and secure: if you are wise, you will seat yourself, and tell me the news at once."

Rokewood threw himself into a low chair, and rested his chin in his hands in a brooding attitude.

"I have been successful to-night," he said. "Fortune played into my hands the best trump cards, but I let an opportunity slip—"

The countess looked up at him quickly.

"Opportunities do not occur every day," she said. "Had you let an opportunity slip at the inn in Normandy, where should we be now? You would still be the slave, the *factotum*, the upper servant of the man whose memory I hate—of the man for whom I wear crape, and put on the airs of a widow, while my heart rejoices in the conviction that his pride is laid low; his cold haughty voice put to silence for ever. Ah! how I hated that man, and how I hate his memory now—his contemptuous refusal of my love—his pitiful attempt at giving me good advice—his offer to

allow me one hundred a year, to keep me, as he said, above want, out of regard and compassion for you—while I—I was panting to wear his diamonds, to loll by his side in his princely carriage, to hold up my head in the royal court as his countess; and to reign here—here among all his pictures, and statues, and heirlooms; amid all his wealth, grandeur, and splendid style—as his wife, queen of all I saw. And to be offered a hundred a year; penitence, patience, and weak tea, cheap tawdry dresses, and genteel poverty, good advice gratis, and compassionate contempt for my lost estates! Oh, that man, that man! I hated him, uncle Rokewood. If you had never done anything else than—"

"Hold!" interrupted Rokewood, starting to his feet, "I am sick to death of this eternal tirade against the dead man. I can never look back to that night without horror. Let us talk now of the future—the girls, these twin daughters—we want their hundred thousand pounds—we must have it! It is not only that I need money, and that you are in debt—that you are resolved to take your place among the highest and noblest of the land, and to unite yourself in marriage, perhaps, who knows, with some ducal house. But we have numbers of hungry people to pay, importunate claimants, who could any day bring down our house of cards about our ears, and overwhelm us in its ruins. There are those lawyers, that person; those persons almost think they have a right to share Grand Court and the estates of the late Earl of Monkhouse with you. With fifty thousand pounds, I could buy them off for ever, ship them away to the colonies, extort from them written confessions of everything and anything I chose to dictate. But we cannot spare that sum out of the Monkhouse estates, not all at once, at least, and we want it at once. I tell you we must have those girls' hundred thousand pounds."

"Take it!" cried Lady Monkhouse. "You are their guardian, take it!"

"But how? The Messrs. Fairbold are left joint executors with me in the will of the late countess. I cannot touch a five-pound note without their knowledge. If they die within the next four years unmarried, you claim all as their father's heiress."

"Well, they must die," said the countess. "I thought we had arranged that the other night."

"They must die," responded Rokewood, gloomily; "but how, when, and where. Those questions you have to consider, Countess Monkhouse. To-night I thought—"

Here he dropped his voice to a whisper, and related rapidly some story to which the countess listened, her wicked eyes flashing, her white teeth gleaming with a savage gleam.

She rose to her feet, and paced up and down the gorgeously-tinted boudoir in a state of wild excitement. She looked like an evil princess out of an eastern story. Her glowing cheek, her robe glittering with crimson and gold, her thick black hair floating nearly to her waist.

"And so you held that girl—his girl—out of the high window, head downwards, over the stumps and roots—and you knew that you held fifty thousand pounds in your hands, and you knew that I hated her for her pride, second only to the hatred I feel for the memory of her father, and yet you hesitated—you let her escape. Coward, coward—chicken heart!"

"Nay, wise, wise—cautious. Have I not told you that some lover of hers, some harum-scarum lad was upon her footsteps, and upon mine? So surely as Lady Norah had lain among those trees, so surely had that wild son of Sir Brooke Danvers unearthen our secret."

An involuntary shudder convulsed the frame of Rokewood as he pronounced the last word.

"As it is, this girl has accused me of attempting to murder her, in the presence of Lady Bateman. I believe she would have maintained silence, had I not attacked and accused her. It was well and wisely done, that humiliation which I heaped upon her. She is one almost to die of wounded pride, and now, no one will believe her accusations against me, saving, perhaps, her random lover, and we must never suffer her to see him again."

"What of that insolent woman, Lady Bateman?" asked the countess, stopping suddenly in front of Rokewood.

"She received a letter by this evening's post," replied Rokewood, "with a coronet upon the seal, and the name of Beechwood scrawled in the corner. It was therefore from the Earl of Beechwood, a widower, a cousin of hers, who has only one little boy. I conjecture that he has written to invite her to preside over his house. I know the idea was in contemplation at one time, but her ladyship was flying at other game—she was scheming to become the second countess of Monkhouse; but now it strikes me she is resolved to relinquish her post of trust here. Earl Beechwood is enormously rich, and it will answer her purpose better to reign as lady president of his

establishment than to live at some cold sea-side place, looking after those two giddy girls——”

“Giddy!” echoed Lady Monkhouse; “they are not giddy—Viola is a sentimental simpleton, Norah is proud, proud as her detested father, the same haughty pose of the head, the same look of scorn in the blue eyes. I do not believe she went out to-night to meet any lover, but to undertake some commission for her sister. I tell you it is through her pride we must destroy that girl. To-morrow it must be whispered about the house that you have discovered something disgraceful in her conduct—this will mortify her to the core—hurt away her reputation, but bring no distinct charge! I tell you she is one to die of wounded pride!”

“Too slow; far too slow!” exclaimed Rokewood, starting to his feet, and pacing the room impatiently in his turn. “We want the money at once, at once—that is to say, within the next three months!”

“Then we must remove those girls from Grand Court,” replied the countess, speaking slowly. “We can do nothing here amid all this crowd of servants. We must travel. My health must give way. I must induce a doctor to prescribe the air of France for my health. The world must suppose me in France. Letters must even be posted from that country, as though written by me.”

“And where will your ladyship be during the time?” asked Rokewood, with a cold smile.

“That requires a little consideration,” answered the countess; “these girls must die within the next three months. Is it not so?”

“Either that, or fifty thousand pounds must be paid away among these Harpies,” answered Rokewood. “Grinder and Co. are growing very unfortunate—Camp, the parson, is quite threatening. We wish to keep up the state and style of Grand Court; how are we to pay-away fifteen or twenty thousand pounds on demand, in such a hurry, unless we gain possession of the fortune of these girls?”

“Then they must die,” said the countess, setting her teeth. “Set your wits to work, uncle, good uncle; invoke your good genius to assist you. I have a plan, a bright and lively plan; but let me first hear yours. Nay, I bow to your superior wit. You shall draw the plan, I will be your agent. Now, commence.”

The countess took two or three brisk turns up and down the boudoir; her golden-crimson robe trailed after her with a sort of majesty. There was a species of grandeur about this woman. She was tall and erect, there was a certain grace in her movements; her head was held proudly, insolently aloft.

Casting her jet-black hair from her brow, where it had strayed during her rapid march in the flowered boudoir, she came to a stand before Rokewood, and began to speak in high, excited tones.

“My youth has not taught me goodness,” she began. “I am no stickler for the proprieties, no champion for the virtues. Disappointment and scorn, suffering and penury have not taught me either charity or love for my species. Now is my hour of triumph, not my highest, grandest triumph, that is yet to come—but improved fortunes have not softened my heart. I hate the class among which my good planet, or my diplomatic skill has cast me. I hate that class which come bowing around me with smiles, as much as ever I did when I was a rider in the Cirque at Paris, or when I sat a starving girl, shivering in rags, upon the wet curb-stones, holding out my hand to implore a copper from the passer-by. I hate that class now as much as ever, and chief objects of my hatred are the two children of the man who seemed to mock me with the promise of his love. I have laid a very cruel plan for the destruction of these Ladies Beaumont. Nay, I would add bitterness to their death pang——”

“Stop, stop,” cried Rokewood, “you speak like a fiend; I want nothing of this sort. Tell me your plan, and have done with it.”

“There is an old house in the North,” said the countess, “buried among the Cumberland hills, an old manse, surrounded by a broken wall, a great neglected garden, tangled over with flowers and fruit trees, flowers which have grown into weeds, in their wild luxuriance, and fruit which has dwarfed and soured in proportion as the timber and boughs have increased, through want of pruning and neglect. For the house itself, nearly all the windows are broken, its walls are damp, its floors are sinking in, an old house that, Uncle Rokewood, of which I have dreamed many and many a time.”

“A true to your dreams!” cried Rokewood.

“Enough; you remember the manse?” said the countess. “It is the place where you were born, and there is a tale connected with it which is so horrible, that it has caused the house to be shut up; and the farmers and cottagers of the Cumberland hills pass it with a shudder on winter nights, and even now, when the yellow September moon is shining on the tangled garden, with its wild overgrowth of un-tended

flowers, and unpruned fruit trees, I believe that not one of the peasants’ children would venture in to search for apples under the branching trees, or peaches beneath the south wall. They have heard the tale of the man—the old man with white hair, blood-stained——”

“Hush, hush! for the love of heaven!” cried Rokewood. “You are a fiend, Margaret!”

“No,” she replied, with a cold, mocking laugh. “I am only a woman, whom suffering and penury have goaded into a state of pitiless antipathy towards the human race. And now for my plan. That old house is yours, though its evil reputation and lonely situation, have prevented its either letting or selling. It will not cost much to have the windows mended, and the garden trimmed; furniture we can send from the overplus in this house, and other houses which belong now to me.

“Then we engage a governess—mind, I engage the governess; and I know where to put my finger upon an excellent one. Two men servants also, I hire—friends of mine, old friends of mine—to whom the jingling of gold speaks more eloquently than the preaching of the parson. The daughters of the Earl of Monkhouse are sent to the manse, Cumberland Manse, because it has been discovered by the countess, their stepmother, that the conduct of the Ladies Beaumont has been imprudent in the extreme, and it is necessary that they live for two or three years in seclusion, under the tutelage of the most prudent woman in the world. Cumberland Grange will in reality be a prison, and the governess their jailor. I shall not be in France, Uncle Rokewood—I shall live in a quiet corner of the old manse, directing everything; but the Ladies Beaumont will believe me to be in France—they will even write letters to me: for I am to be their friend, you must understand. It is you that will be harsh; and will insist on their undergoing such rigorous treatment. We have a great deal of plate in that old manse, and some old-fashioned jewellery, seals, rings, antiquities—heirlooms which have descended to you from your ancestors: we can buy all those things in Wardour street for about a hundred and fifty pounds. One night the manse is attacked; the valuables are stolen—three or four people are murdered in their beds—two or three peasants in the neighbourhood must be sacrificed to this emergency——”

“Margaret,” cried Rokewood, “this sounds like a chapter of horrors out of the history of the middle ages. You forget we are in the nineteenth century—the time of railways, police spies and telegraphic messages.”

“A woman’s daring, a woman’s vengeance will outwit them all,” cried the countess. “Cumberland Manse, your evil reputation shall be strengthened. Before three months there shall be two new, marble monuments in the village church at Cumberland—one raised to the memory of the twin daughters of the late Earl of Monkhouse.

(To be continued.)

MR. GEORGE PEABODY has made a donation of an additional 1,000,000 dollars to the Southern (United States) Education Fund.

BEFORE leaving Brussels his highness and Viceroy of Egypt sent 25,000 francs (1,000£) to be distributed among the poor of Brussels.

A SPARROW with three legs was captured by some boys in North Shields last week. The third leg had five claws. The bird died shortly after being caught.

IT is stated that Vice Admiral Sir Henry Kellet, K.C.B., who has just been appointed to the command of the China squadron, has met with an accident having been thrown out of a carriage while on a visit in the country.

THE large diamond of 83½ carats lately discovered at the Cape, has reached London. The colonists are quite proud of their treasure, and the few who still doubt its genuineness are contemptuously dismissed as envious, or idiots. If we may believe the newspapers of the Cape, the stone is as large as a walnut, without a flaw, but irregular in outline, and its value has been variously guessed by local critics at from 20,000£ to 40,000£.

M. FONTANA, architect to the Czar’s Ministry of the Household, is charged to construct, on the model of the London Crystal Palace, the building for the exhibition which is to take place at St. Petersburg next year. A sum of 27,000£ is allowed for this structure; the number of workmen employed is at present 400, but will be speedily augmented, for the building must be completed externally by the 1st of September next, and entirely by the 1st of May, 1870.

A WHALE has a four cavitated heart, warm blood, and lungs. It also has a rudimentary pelvis. A fish

has a two cavitated heart, cold blood, and breathes by means of gills. A whale, therefore, is not a fish. I once had a serious row with a man on this point. The argument used by Mr. N— was, “That a whale was a fish; he had served fifteen years at sea, and therefore he ought to know what a fish was against any man.”—W. P. S.

TWO old names in politics will henceforth appear before the public in a fresh form. Mr. Frederick Peel, brother of the Baronet, and Mr. C. B. Adderley, the member for North Staffordshire, are henceforth Sir Frederick Peel and Sir Charles Bowyer Adderley. They are included in the Knights Commanders of the new order of St Michael and St. George.

SELLING OFF AT COST.

WE met Higgins the other day in a quandary. He stood at the street corner contemplating a pair of gloves which he held in his hand. We accosted him, and asked why he thus solemnly meditated. He gave a sudden start, and looked up.

“Ah! Ah-ah! D’ye see these gloves?”
We saw them.

“D’ye know Smokington?”
We knew him.

“Well,” explained Higgins, “I was coming by Smokington’s this morning, and I saw, stuck up over the front of his shop window, big bills of ‘Selling off at Cost.’ Thinks I to myself, ‘Here’s a chance;’ and I went in and bought these gloves and half-a-dozen linen handkerchiefs. I asked Smokington if he was selling to meat cost, and he said, ‘Certainly.’ I carried the handkerchiefs home, and asked my wife to hem them. She asked me what I paid for them, and when I told her, she laughed, and said I’d been cheated. They were not linen at all—only cotton—and she could buy any quantity of them for just one half what I had paid. I wouldn’t believe her. I knew—or thought I knew—Smokington to be a man of honour. I came out, and put on my new gloves. They ripped. Jones saw ‘em, and asked what I paid. I told him. He laughed, and said I’d been cheated. He could sell the very same article for less than half what I had paid.

“Now, what I want to know is—Is Smokington a cheat? Has he been lying to me?”

We asked Higgins why he didn’t go down and ascertain. He wanted us to go with him; and we went.

We found Smokington very smiling, and very busy—customers plentiful, and goods going off at a rush; but at length Higgins managed to draw him aside, when he spoke as follows:

“Look here, Smokington, old boy—you’ve cheated me.”

“Eh?—cheated, Mr. Higgins? Really, I don’t see it.”

“Didn’t you tell me you were selling me these things at cost? and ain’t you telling everybody so by the bills you’ve got stuck up?”

Smokington smiled, and said: “Certainly.”

“Well,” demanded Higgins, with immense assurance and indignation, “do you mean to say that you sold me these gloves, and these cotton handkerchiefs, at cost?”

“Certainly.”

“Smokington! I thought you were a man of honour!”

“My dear Higgins,” said the trader, with a smile that was fairly bewitching, “you don’t understand these things. It’s all right. I sold to you just as I said. Of course I could not afford to sell goods for what they cost me. I am selling off at cost to the customer! D’ye see it now?”

Higgins considers himself enlightened in the especial commercial department of “selling off at cost;” but he thinks he shall never be able to put full confidence in Smokington again.

TWO young women recently fought a duel in Pueblo, to decide their claim to the possession of a male Mexican’s love and person. One of the combatants was killed.

THERE are comparatively few people at Vichy this year, and many failures have taken place. The fact is that the Emperor having now abandoned Vichy, the waters are “less efficacious.”

A MEMBER of the Vermont Legislature, rising to reply to a very frothy and ignorant orator on the other side, said: “Mr. Speaker, I can’t reply to that ere speech, for it always wrenches me terribly to kick at nothin’.”

REPORTS from various parts of California have been received of the rapid progress of rust in wheat and barley crops. The damage is most considerable in the coast counties, where heavy fog has prevailed for weeks past. Although the accounts represent that the rust is not general, the mischief is more serious than anticipated.



[ONE MINUTE TO LIVE]

"Not a word in extenuation," Leonard cried, "it is my turn to speak now. You only aggravate your numerous offences by insinuating that you deserve clemency at my hands. Callous and unfeeling wretch, you must pay the penalty of your offences. Your time is come. In one minute from this time you will be a dead man."

Taking a watch from his pocket, Leonard, holding it in his left hand, and his gun in the right, regarded the minute hand.

"Make your peace with the heaven you have offended," he added; "I feel that I am not about to commit murder—I am an executioner. Dare to address one word to me and I shoot you through the heart, without the minute's grace I have promised."

The change in Count Davignon's manner was marked in the extreme. His tottering limbs refused to bear the burden of his sinking body, and he fell on his knees, holding up his hands clasped together, in the manner of one mentally supplicating for mercy.

Very rapidly went the minute. Leonard seemed to gloat over the misery of the wretched Frenchman, whom he regarded with hardened looks from un pitying eyes. His manner was full of a fierce and irresistible determination; when fifty seconds had elapsed, he replaced the watch in his pocket, and raising his gun, covered the count with the muzzle, which pointed at his heart.

The count's agony was fearful to witness; big drops of perspiration rolled from his forehead onto the ground, as his whole frame shook convulsively; he attempted to cry out, but his tongue clove to the roof of his mouth, and his effort resulted in an inarticulate sound.

When he saw the gun raised, his eye-balls threatened to start from his head, and with a rapid movement, he threw himself back, covering his face with his hands so as to shut out the dreadful prospect.

With cool deliberation, Leonard Chetwode pulled the trigger and shot at the man, as he lay on the ground, huddled up in a heap. There was a flash of fire, a puff of smoke, and a loud report. The count was hit in the back—he uttered a loud cry, jerked out his limbs, rolled over on his face, and lay extended, rigid and motionless. The dog which had recovered from the savage kick the count had bestowed upon it, and which had stunned it for a time, crept up, and licked his face, until called off by Leonard, who approached his victim, examined him carefully for a brief space, and feeling sure that he was dead, shouldered his gun, and walked away as if nothing had happened.

The count shivered with fear as he spoke, and Leonard's mocking laugh rang in his ear.

"Do you not deserve death at my hands?" exclaimed the latter, glaring ferociously at the unarmed man before him. "Have you not made me your slave, and cannot I see plainly that the remainder of my existence is to be sacrificed to your advancement, and the gratification of your vile ambition, unless I treat you as men treat a poisonous reptile, and kill you out of the way?"

"Leonard! my dear, good fellow," began the count, who was cut short by an impulsive gesture.

the effects of terrible excitement, which prevented him from dwelling upon his crime—its enormity, or the consequences which would very probably follow it. All that he thought of in that moment of what he foolishly considered victory was this: he had got rid of an enemy, of a man who it appeared held his future prospects in his hand, by means of the possession of a secret—with his life went also his power. Count Davignon was dead, consequently Leonard Chetwode was free.

That was how the young man reasoned.

Instead of returning to the Hall by the route he had pursued on entering the warren, he was sensible enough to plunge into the recesses of the wood, pushing his way through the dense undergrowth of scrub, and taking a path which would lead him to a little village on the other side, and conduct him home by a circuitous path through the fields.

After walking for an hour or more, he came to a keeper's house, which he entered, shaking hands with the man, who remembered him before he went abroad; drinking a glass of ale, and addressing a few words to a couple of watchers who were sitting in a corner near the fire, smoking their pipes.

The keeper inquired if he had had any sport, saying he could take him to a spot where he knew there was some wild fowl. The upper lake swarmed with them, and a heron had been seen there that very morning.

"Not now," replied Leonard, "another time. I came out more to look about me than anything else. I wanted to kill a jay, as I require the feathers to make a peculiar sort of fly for fishing. I got a shot at one, but did not kill, and that is the only barrel I have discharged to-day."

Pleading the necessity of getting home in time for dinner, Leonard took leave of the keeper, thinking he had established an *alibi*, if any suspicion should attach to him, when the death of the count was discovered; he congratulated the keeper on being still in his position, and requested him to look sharply after the nests and eggs, as he expected to have some excellent shooting in the autumn.

It was dark when Leonard Chetwode arrived at the Hall, and the dinner-bell was ringing. Giving his gun to a domestic, and telling him to tie the dog up in a kennel, he went to his room and made a hasty toilette. He was pale when he descended into the dining-room, but he was much calmer than in the morning. Having thrown off the terrible load which oppressed him, he had placed another on his shoulders which, however strange it may seem, he found it was less difficult to bear. It was true that he

was actually a murderer, but he trusted that he should not be proclaimed as such to the world, and dismissed all thoughts of the tragedy of the morning with the sophistical argument that the count deserved his fate on account of the persecution to which he had so pertinaciously subjected him.

Yet an inward tremor would attack him, causing him to lower his eyes and make his pallor deepen.

By the exercise of an effort he conversed on various subjects during dinner, and there was a warmth in his manner, when addressing Mae, which had not been noticeable before.

Sir Roslyn commented upon the absence of Count Davignon, wondering that he should be so late, when he was so well acquainted with the dinner hour.

"Davignon," replied Leonard, with remarkable equanimity, "is a strange man. He is the most eccentric individual of my acquaintance. At times he is subject to attacks of melancholy which amount to hypochondria; and I have known him absent himself from his friends for weeks and months at a time without saying a word of explanation or excuse. A clever French doctor on one occasion assured me that this tendency to gloom would some day, in all likelihood, result in suicide. His manner and conduct is inexplicable when the fit is on him."

"Indeed," said Sir Roslyn Chetwode, "you surprise me. I had not noticed anything of a saturnine nature in his character and disposition."

"Nor I," remarked Mae. "The count appeared to me to have a continuous flow of good spirits."

"Ah," said Leonard, with a sickly smile, "you do not know him so well as I do. Perhaps he may come back when dinner is over. Perhaps, on the contrary, you may have a letter in the morning to say he has gone abroad, or—but we will not pursue the speculation further."

A perceptible shudder ran through the young man, he was unable to repress it, for his vivid imagination conjured up the affrighting spectacle of a ghastly and hideously injured corpse, lying stiff and stark in the cold moonlight, and crying aloud to heaven for vengeance, in that lonely wood.

He seized a decanter of wine which stood near him, and poured out a glassful, which he drank. Neither his father, Mae, nor the servant who stood behind his chair, seemed to remark his agitation, or if they did, they were far from ascribing it to its true cause.

After dinner Mae left the gentlemen together, and Leonard drank hard to drown the spectre which was now by his side, and he succeeded in a great measure in doing so, for Sir Roslyn, with pleasure sparkling in his eyes, admitted to himself that his son was full of anecdote, and had a most charming knack of conducting and maintaining a conversation.

At times the gloomy consciousness that he was a criminal would come over him, and he would break down in the middle of the witty jest, or the brilliant recital, and stare vacantly before him. Sir Roslyn regarded him wonderingly when this happened, and was glad when he recalled his wandering thoughts, and braced up his scattered energies, explaining his conduct by saying that he was making an effort of memory.

In the drawing-room, Mae Aldis, gentle Mae, who had looked forward so ardently to the coming of this cold and distant lover, sat by herself indulging in gloomy reflections, and wondering if Leonard Chetwode would ever woo and win her as she had been led to suppose.

He was very handsome; there was something wild and Byronic about his beauty, which did not render him the less interesting in her favouring eye. She had on various occasions met elaborately dressed, curled, and perfumed dandies, who fancied that the art of the tailor, and the skill of the hair-dresser, were the only things which would render them interesting in a woman's eyes.

From those she had turned with well-merited disdain, for she was a pure-hearted, simple-minded child of nature, artless and unaffected.

Leonard's coolness and seeming indifference had cost her great misery.

It must be remembered that she had for years been taught to love this handsome stranger. He had sent his photograph from Rome, and she had treasured it up amongst the little articles which she held most sacred, and which are at all times to be found in the innermost recesses of a young lady's writing-case or work-box. The *lunaria* thing had been frequently raised to her lips to receive a soft imprint in moments of silent meditation, and the eloquent *carte de visite* had enabled her to conjure Leonard before her in all the striking beauties of his ripe and splendid manhood, though he himself was far away.

"Pity," the poet has said, "is akin to love," and she had pitied him. When the news came that he was drowned, and she fancied that the stormy waves of the treacherous ocean had closed over his head for ever, she could not control her widowed heart,

which had pined for the man who was established there to the exclusion of all others.

The niche in the throne upon which the loved image had stood was vacant, and she much feared that she should never be able to supply its place.

When, however, the grave gave up its dead, as it were, and Leonard actually made his appearance in his father's house, all her old love for him revived and the flame burned with fresh and resistless force.

Our readers may, therefore, imagine how all her hopes were crushed, and hard despair took possession of her mind when Leonard turned coldly from her, and seemed to treat her with indifference, not unmixed with contempt.

A pleasant surprise was this evening in store for her. Leonard had, the moment he saw pretty Mae Aldis, surrendered at discretion and most fully, that heart which was hers of right; and having got rid of the count, who was the only obstacle in the way of his declaration of love, he did not scruple to treat her with a kindness and evident affection, which sent the hot blood in a stream to her face, and caused her young heart to leap lightly in her bosom.

What though his face was flushed with wine, and his manner at times quick and hurried, she, that evening, listened to the words of love for the first time, and what girl can ever forget such delicious moments?

Sir Roslyn Chetwode had sunk to sleep in his old arm-chair, after partaking of his second cup of coffee, and the lovers were left to themselves to talk together with that delightful freedom, which a knowledge of loving and being loved, always confers upon the happy objects of the mutual passion.

"You must not mind my boldness in complimenting you on your loveliness," exclaimed Leonard, as she shrank away from his ardent gaze, after he had made a speech which appeared to her a little more extravagant than any of its predecessors. "Have I not been led to regard you as my future wife, and have I not done so for years past?"

"Have you?" asked Mae, trying to search his soul with her full, lustreous, and earnest eyes.

It was a simple question, but it caused Leonard to crimson—man of the world though he was, he could not keep back the tell-tale blood which would rush into his face.

"Have you always thought of me as your own little wife, Leonard?" pursued Mae, whose modesty did not allow her to question him long with her eyes.

"What do you mean?" he said, striving to recover himself, and get rid of the confusion which had so suddenly attacked him.

"Only this," answered Mae Aldis, "It would seem so natural for a young man, so—so handsome, as you are, to attract the notice of many ladies in foreign lands, and I thought that before seeing me, you might have wavered in your affection, and have sworn fidelity to some dark-haired beauty in the sunny south, where love, they tell me, is queen of all. I should not have blamed you, and—forgive me—but this change in your manner is so very sudden. I can scarcely credit the evidence of my senses. This morning you were so cold, so distant; and now—now—"

"I am all you could wish me, is it not so?" replied Leonard. "I am not always alike. I am subject to fits of abstraction, so that you must not wonder at a little oddness in my manner occasionally."

"Which arises from—what shall I say?" exclaimed Mae. "From the oppressive recollection of your loves abroad."

"I was never a general admirer of the fair sex—that is to say, I did not, even when very young, make love to every woman I met. You should have confined yourself to the singular, Mae."

"Oh! then you admit that you had one love," said Mae, sharply.

"I admit nothing," answered Leonard, a little angrily, while he coloured again. "Is it not foolish on your part to pursue such an unprofitable subject? Will not my openly-expressed admiration for you content you?"

"Oh, Leonard!" she exclaimed, letting the long and graceful fringe droop over her eyes, which filled with tears instantly.

Seeing the effect his harshness had produced, he took her hand in his, but she snatched it away with a display of feminine independence which made him all the more anxious to soothe her, and which he succeeded in doing after a long and penitential speech.

The little lady listened very gravely to his exclamation, and when he had finished speaking, she said, with the first tinge of sadness which he had remarked on her face during that evening:

"Whatever your past may have been, Leonard, I will never attempt to tear down the veil which hides it. I am content to believe your vows. I have been taught to love you, and the verdict of my heart has

confirmed and sanctioned the pleasing lesson. You may think this confession unmaidenly, but I must and will tell you that however you treat me, I can never do aught else than adore you with all the force of a passionate nature and the unreflecting love of an impulsive girl."

Leonard raised her hand to his lips and kissed it with fervour.

"Let that," he said, "seal the compact of our love."

Suddenly Sir Roslyn Chetwode woke up with a start, and looked wildly about him.

"Eh! what! where!" he cried, "where is the count?"

"The count!" repeated Leonard, in a sepulchral tone.

"Yes. I thought I saw him at—at one of those windows, but I was asleep at the time. It's a nightmare. Bad plan to go to sleep directly after dinner. I must break myself of the habit. Dounced ugly dreams though, ugly!"

"How did the count appear at the window, gravity?" asked Mae, innocently.

"I won't tell you, little puss, because I might disturb your night's rest. What a ghastly dream to be sure!"

And the old gentleman shivered till his teeth seemed to shake together.

As for Leonard, he was like one cast out of stone.

CHAPTER VIII.

No, Hilda, no, thy fatal fame
Was nursed in sorrow, silence, shame;
A passion without hope or pleasure,
In thy soul's darkness buried deep,
It lies like some ill-gotten treasure,
On which pale-eyed vampires keep
Unholy watch, while others sleep. Moore.

The signal which Lady Beatrice had given was quickly responded to—a man came out of the shadow of a doorway on the opposite side of the street, and gave a low whistle.

About half a minute elapsed, and then Lady Beatrice and the stranger having preserved their relative positions during this time, a carriage drove up to the curb. The man crossed the street, bowed with obsequious politeness to the lady, and opened the door of the vehicle, which was a small and elegantly appointed brougham, drawn by a powerful coal-black horse.

Beatrice entered the brougham, the man closed the door, again bowing profoundly, and took up his position on the box by the side of the coachman, who touched the horse with his whip, causing him to go at a rapid pace along the road.

Lord Adlowe remained undecided for the space of a few seconds, then he darted forward, and springing up sat upon the board at the back of the carriage, holding on, in this undignified position as well as he was able. The gaslight had enabled him to see the face of the man who had responded to the signal given by her ladyship.

He was dark, even swarthy, and his bronzed countenance was covered with hair. In stature he was short, though somewhat thickset, and his lordship came to the conclusion that he was an Italian, as he resembled the people of that country more than he did those of any other.

On gaining the Edgware Road the brougham was driven rapidly towards Kilburn, which, in those days, was not built upon and populated as it is at present.

Rain drops began to fall, and there was every appearance of a wet and stormy night; but Lord Adlowe did not heed the threatening aspect of the weather. He felt convinced that he was on the eve of making a great discovery, and he would have gone through fire and water to gain the precious information which seemed to be in his grasp.

When about four miles, or thereabouts, had been traversed the brougham turned up a narrow country lane. The wind souffled among the branches of the trees which fringed it on either side, and the light from the carriage lamps cast weird shadows upon the hedges, which were already glistening with the falling rain.

At the distance of a quarter of a mile from the main road was a small house, which, described in auctioneers' parlance, would be said to be standing in its own grounds. The gate, leading into a garden principally remarkable for its dense shrubbery, stood open.

Passing through, the coachman traversed the short space separating it from the house, at which he pulled up, while the Italian knocked twice at the front door, and entered, returning almost immediately with an umbrella, which he held over her ladyship's head as she alighted from the brougham.

Lord Adlowe, still in his place of concealment, heard her say: "Thank you, Giorno, that will do, I have no fear of the weather." And when he had seen her enter the house, the door of which was

quickly shut behind her, he descended from the board on which he had been perched, in great discomfort and crept away to the friendly shelter of a laurel bush which stood just under the window of a sitting room in which there were lights, as gleams penetrated through chinks in the carefully-closed shutters.

The brougham remained in front of the house, which assured Lord Adlowe that it was waiting to take the Lady Beatrice Hampton home again, and he resolved to return in the same way he had come.

With the fast-falling rain dripping down upon him from the eaves, Lord Adlowe listened with the utmost attention, but though he could distinguish the sound of voices, he could hear nothing distinctly.

This was a great disappointment to him, because he esteemed himself exceptionally fortunate in having been able to trace Beatrice to this house. He had no doubt that he should be able to find it again, for he had taken particular notice of the road as he came along, and he had remarked some strangely shaped trees at the corner of the lane down which they had turned.

The house itself was a plain, brick-built structure, with nothing very striking in its appearance; yet there was that in its general design which impressed its formation on Lord Adlowe's mind, and he did not doubt for a moment that he should know it again.

Lady Beatrice paid a short visit. She did not remain an hour in the house; the doors of which suddenly opened, Giorno accompanied her down the steps, she got into the carriage, the Italian sprang lightly on the box, and the journey to town was commenced.

Lord Adlowe did not experience any difficulty in resuming his old position as he went back, regardless of the rain which had wet him to the skin, and the thick mud with which his garments were plentifully besprinkled.

He considered that Lady Beatrice Hampton was now in his power.

It would be very odd, he thought, if he did not discover the cause of her visit to this mysterious house on the road to Edgeware, a visit of which he perfectly satisfied the earl, her father, was entirely unconscious.

To find out where she went was the first thing to be done; and he had achieved that—to find out why she went was the next task which he proposed to himself, and he registered a vow that many days should not pass over his head, before he found out the elucidation of the mystery.

Thinking that the brougham would stop at the entrance to the mews, where it had taken up Beatrice, his lordship alighted and walked round without being perceived by Giorno, to the square; he was admitted at the front door of the earl's house, and walked at once to the passage leading to the garden, posting himself in such a position that her ladyship on entering could not fail to see him.

To his great satisfaction she had not been quicker than he, and before he had been long in his concealed position, she opened the garden door, and met him face to face in the passage.

He smiled, and extending his hand, exclaimed :

" You have, I presume, been indulging in another nocturnal walk in your garden, Lady Beatrice, but if so, I cannot congratulate you upon having selected the most favourable weather."

" How dare you, my lord, play the spy upon my actions?" she exclaimed, indignantly, showing more anger in her face than Lord Adlowe had ever observed there before. " This is the second time that I have to thank you for being watched. Yours is not the conduct of a gentleman, and it will not be a stepping-stone to my favour, I can assure you."

" Pray be calm," replied Lord Adlowe; " I, too, have been out, and it was in looking for your father that I came into this passage, and most unintentionally incurred your displeasure. Like yourself, I am wet with the rain, though you seem to be scarcely sprinkled, while I am in a state of complete moisture—in fact I am drenched."

" The weather drove me in almost as soon as I had gone out," answered Beatrice; " may I inquire where you have been, and why you dared the rage of the elements."

" It gives me great pleasure, which I shall not take the trouble of disguising, to think that your ladyship takes so much interest in my movements. I will tell you the truth, and admit—"

" Is the truth, when told by you, of such rare occurrence, my lord, that you should make a boast of it?" interrupted her ladyship, while her handsome lip curled with proud scorn.

" On the contrary, I am always truthful, though I fear there are some with whom I am acquainted, who trifle with the truth. I have been some distance on the road to Edgeware to-night, Lady Beatrice."

He was sorry for it, when this admission escaped his lips, because it was, to a certain extent, showing

his hand to his wary enemy, and putting her on her guard; but he watched her carefully, to see the effect of his announcement.

The Lady Beatrice Hampton darted a look of intense hate at him; but by the exercise of a violent effort, she quenched the angry fire which burned in her sparkling eyes, and became externally calm.

" In that case, my lord," she answered, " if you have, as I should imagine from your general appearance, walked the greater part of the distance, I shall, in mercy to you, curtail this conversation, and give you permission to retire to change your wet clothes, the longer wearing of which may have a prejudicial effect on your health."

" You are too considerate," he replied. " I do not deserve such kindness at your hands."

Beatrice, not in the least deceived by his mock humility, made him a haughty bow, and passing by him, strode through the hall to the grand staircase, though her footfall was light, and her manner that of one who did not wish to attract attention by her movements.

Lord Adlowe watched her with a cold, cynical smile upon his lips, and congratulated himself upon having gone a step farther towards the goal.

The earl had retired to rest some time before, he found on inquiry, and being very wet and uncomfortable, he ordered some spirits and water to be brought to his bedroom, and having changed his saturated garments, he sat for some time ruminating before the fire, his feet encased in slippers, and his body wrapped in a luxurious cashmere dressing-gown.

The more he reflected upon the rashness of which he had been guilty, in telling her ladyship that he had been to Edgeware, or part of the way there, the more he was obliged to condemn himself.

He resolved to prosecute his inquiries early in the morning, and also not to go to the lonely house unaccompanied by a friend. It was impossible to say into what sort of a place he was about to penetrate, or how he might be treated when he arrived there.

His intention was to inquire boldly for the Lady Beatrice Hampton when the door was opened, and to refuse to go until his curiosity was gratified as to the name and condition of the owner of the house.

Captain Greville, at present on leave from his regiment, which was located in camp at Aldershot, was a most intimate friend of Lord Adlowe's, and the latter resolved to seek him soon after breakfast the following morning, and request him to accompany him on his novel and somewhat Quixotic expedition. At nine o'clock his lordship descended to breakfast, but was not gratified by the appearance of Beatrice, whom he supposed to be indisposed by the fatigue of the preceding night.

To the Earl of Hampton he made an excuse for his prolonged absence the evening before, and regretted that he did not see him on his return, as they might have had a game at cards, but the earl replied, rather testily, that he could not in reason expect him to sit up half the night, even with the agreeable prospect of enjoying his society at some time or other however remote.

Seeing that the earl was not in the best possible temper, and not wishing to quarrel with him, which would have obliged him to leave the house before he had discovered Beatrice's secret, Lord Adlowe put on his hat and went out.

Previously to doing so he inquired of one of the servants, whom he had on more than one occasion feed, to keep him provided with little scraps of reliable information, where the Lady Beatrice was, and the reply somewhat astonished him, as he was told, in answer to his question, that she had gone out at eight o'clock without saying a word to anybody.

His mental comment upon this proceeding on her part was :

" She has stolen a march upon me!"

And he hastened his movements in consequence. Captain Greville was a young man of good family—not over rich—but sufficiently well off to be able to maintain his position in a well-known, and exclusive cavalry regiment, without running into debt. When in town he stayed at a fashionable Bond Street hotel, and it was at this favourite resort of his that Lord Adlowe had found him. He was not up when he called, but he soon came down in his dressing-gown and slippers, and expressed his great pleasure at seeing Adlowe, whom he thought still abroad.

" Some fellow told me you had returned," he exclaimed, " and I could not meet anyone who had seen you. I did not place much reliance on what I heard. Where on earth have you been hiding since you came back?"

" It is rather a long story, Greville," replied Lord Adlowe; " and as I want you to come with me at once on a little expedition of a delicate nature, I will, with your kind permission, reserve the recital until we are on the road."

" Oh, by all means, please yourself about that," answered Captain Greville. " Do you mind ordering me something to eat—boiled bones, devilled kidneys, an anchovy toast, or something of that sort. I never travel without breakfast. I shall not be long dressing."

Lord Adlowe nodded, and by the time the breakfast was ready, the captain, whose military experience had made him a quick dresser, was on the spot—ten minutes more, and they were walking arm-in-arm up Bond Street.

" I think we must have a cab, a hansom, of course. What do you say?" observed Lord Adlowe.

" What is the use of consulting me?" replied Captain Greville, " when I neither know where we are going, or what we are going to do when we get there. If you will be good enough to enlighten me as to our destination, and the nature of our enterprise, I shall no doubt be able to give you some advice."

Lord Adlowe smiled, handed his friend his cigar case, hailed a passing cab, and said, calmly :

" You are right. It is but reasonable that you should know why I have brought you out. Let us talk."

Seating themselves in the cab, Lord Adlowe said to the driver :

" Take the road to Edgeware, and go fast," and turning to his friend Captain Greville, he added : " Now I will endeavour to make you understand as much of a complicated and mysterious affair as I know myself. This morning's adventures will, in all probability, raise the veil a little higher, but who knows? We are in the hands of fate, and can never predicate with any certainty as to the future."

(To be continued.)

THE "captive balloon" at Chelsea which lately escaped through the rope breaking, has been repaired and it has again commenced its ascents.

BARON GUSTAVE DE ROTHSCHILD has purchased the Duchess de Bauffremont's mansion in the Champs Elysées for 2,800,000 francs.

The gold fever in South Africa is now rapidly dying out. Sir J. Swinburn's party is getting four oxs. per ton from crushed quartz.

THE Queen has contributed 100*£* towards the funds of Mrs. Gladstone's Convalescent Home, and has presented for the use of its inmates a copy of her journal, with an autograph inscription.

THE ISLE OF DOGS.—There are at the present time, according to an official statement, nearly 700 houses unoccupied in the Isle of Dogs. In most instances the doors and shutters have been carried away, and every square of glass is broken. Many of the tenements are falling rapidly into decay. The total number receiving out-door relief in Poplar is 5,018, last year 6,976.

THE TOWER SUBWAY.—This work has now passed the nearest approach to the bed of the river, the top of the tunnel being 23 feet below the bed, and the engineer, Mr. Peter W. Barlow, jun., reports that at the present rate of progress the tunnel will reach high-water mark on the Surrey side in ten weeks. The ground, it is said, is so dry that the New River Company's water laid on the works has to be taken from the shafts for the cement used in the tunnel. Air is supplied to the men by a steam-engine at the shafts. Communication between the men at the face of the works and the top of the shafts is effected by an electric telegraph.

THE TICHBORNE BARONETCY.—We understand, on the best authority, that this extraordinary and romantic case is now complete in all its details, and that the claimant and his numerous friends are only waiting the return of the Australian Commission to go into Court and prove him the rightful heir. We believe that the vessel which picked up Sir Roger at sea off Rio Janeiro, and took him into Melbourne harbour, has been discovered, and that the mate of the ship admits a clear recollection of having handed the baronet over the side of the vessel in an exhausted condition. The claimant has been identified by nearly every officer, non-commissioned officer, and private in his old regiment, the 6th Dragoon Guards, who have seen and conversed with him. Twelve county magistrates have sworn to his identity, in addition to the sworn evidence of his mother and that of three of his cousins. He also holds the sworn evidence of 200 of his former friends, tenants and servants. Those opposed to him assert that he is a sailor of the name of Arthur Orton: but we understand that such an allegation is wholly unfounded. It cannot be long before the commission returns, and this singular case will then be brought to an issue.

A LOST OPPORTUNITY.—When the Viceroy of Egypt inspected the fire brigade in the gardens of Buckingham Palace, we learn that, in order to illustrate the utility of fire-escapes, certain firemen went

through the form of rescue from the roof of the palace. They assumed, we are told, a helpless state, and were carried down on the backs of their comrades, some being lowered by means of ropes. At the same time his Highness could have been favoured with other scenes illustrative of our habits which could not have failed to interest him, and would have been useful as warnings, if not as examples. For instance, a few hack cabs might have been driven to the palace gardens, a select number of police constables assuming a helpless condition while the vehicles were allowed to loiter leisurely through the grounds. The entrance to the palace might have been upheaved by one of our gas companies, then carefully relaid and repaved; upheaved again by a waterworks company, again carefully relaid, and then dug up once more by an underground railway company—everybody present assuming “the helpless condition.” The Viceroy would then have left the palace with a fair idea of the “working of our systems.”

THE PILOT'S REVENGE.

It was towards night on the twenty-first of September, 1834. A small war-brig, which had been fitted out for the suppression of smuggling, was lazily creeping along over the heavy, monotonous swells, just off the coast of Galway, and on her deck was being enacted a scene of somewhat more than common interest. The day before, she had captured a small boat laden with contraband articles, together with an old man and a boy who had charge of them; and the captain of the brig, whose name was Draycott, had ordered that the old smuggler should be put in irons. To this indignity the old man made a stout resistance, and in the heat of the moment he had so far forgotten himself as to strike the captain a blow, which laid him upon the deck. Such an insult to an officer was past endurance, and in punishment for his offence the smuggler had been condemned to die.

A single whip was rove at the starboard fore-yard arm, and all hands were called to witness the execution. The rope was noosed and slipped over the culprit's head, and the running end was rove through a small snatch-block upon the deck. Until this moment not a word had escaped the lips of the boy. He trembled as he beheld the awful preparations, and as the fatal noose was passed and drawn tight, the colour forsook his cheeks, and he sprang forward and dropped upon his knees before the incensed captain.

“Mercy! sir, mercy!”

“For whom?” asked the officer, while a contemptuous sneer rested upon his lips.

“For that old man whom you are about to kill.”

“He dies, boy.”

“But he is my father, sir.”

“No matter if he were my own father; that man who strikes an officer while in the performance of his duty, must die.”

“But he was manacled—he was insulted, sir,” urged the boy.

“Insulted!” repeated the captain. “Who insulted him?”

“You did, sir,” replied the boy, while his face was flushed with indignation.

“Get up, sir, and be careful that you do not get the same treatment,” said the captain, in a savage tone.

The old man heard this appeal of his son, and as the last words dropped from the lips of his captor he raised his head, and while a look of the utmost defiance passed over his features, he exclaimed:

“Ask no favours, Robert. Old Karl Kintock can die as well now as at any time; let them do the worst.”

Then turning to Captain Dracont, he changed his tone for one of deep supplication, and said:

“Do what what you please with me, sir, but do not harm my boy, for he has done no wrong. I am ready for your sentence, and the sooner you finish it the better.”

“Lay hold of the whip,” shouted the captain. “Lay hold, every man of you, and stand by to run the villain up.”

In obedience to this order, the men ranged themselves along the deck, and each one laid hold of the rope. Robert Kintock looked first at his father, and then he ran his eyes along the line of men who were to be his executioners. But no one sympathising or pitying look could he trace. Their faces were all hard and cold, and they all appeared anxious to consummate their murderous work.

“What!” exclaimed the boy, while a tear started from his trembling lids, “is there not one, even, who can pity?”

“Up with him?” shouted the captain.

Robert buried his face in his hands, and the next moment his father was swinging at the yard-arm. He heard the passing rope and the creaking block, and he knew that he was fatherless.

Half-an-hour afterwards the boy knelt by the side of a ghastly corpse, and a simple prayer escaped his lips. Then another low, murmuring sound came up from his bosom; but none of those who stood around knew its import. It was a pledge of deep revenge.

Just as the old man's body slid from the gang-board into the water, a vivid flash of lightning streamed through the heavens, and in another instant the dread artillery of nature sent forth a roar so long and loud that the men actually placed their hands to their ears to shut out its deafening power. Robert Kintock started at the sound, and what had caused dread in others' bosoms sent a thrill of satisfaction to his own.

“Oh, revenge! revenge!” he muttered to himself, as he cast his eyes over the foam-crested waves which had already risen beneath the power of the sudden storm.

The darkness had come quickly as did the storm and all that could be distinguished from the deck of the brig, save the breaking sea, was the fearful, craggy shore, as flash after flash of lightning illuminated the heavens.

“Light, ho!” shouted a man forward, and the next moment all eyes were directed to a bright light which had suddenly flashed up among the distant rocks.

The wind had now reached its height, and with its giant power it set the ill-fated brig directly upon the surf-bound shore of rocks and reefs, and every face, save one, was blanched with fear. In vain did they try to lay the brig to the wind, but not a sail would hold for an instant, until at length the men managed to get up a fore and main storm-stay-sail, and then the brig stood for ash ort time bravely up against the heaving sea. But it was evident that even should she succeed in keeping to the wind, she must eventually be driven ashore, for the power of the in-setting waves was greater than that of the wind.

“Boy, do you know what light that is?” asked the captain, as he stood holding on to the main rigging to keep his feet.

“Yes, sir,” replied Robert; “it is Bullymore's crag.”

“What is it there for?”

“It marks the entrance to a little harbour, sir, which lies in the back of it.”

“And can it be entered by a vessel of this size?” asked the captain, while a gleam of hope shot across his face.

“Oh yes, sir. A large ship can enter there.”

“And do you know the passage?”

“Yes, sir; I have spent my whole life on this coast, and I know every turn in it.”

“Can you take the brig in there in this storm?”

“Yes, sir,” answered the boy, while a strange light shot from his eyes.

“And will you do it?” eagerly asked the captain.

“On two conditions.”

“Name them, quickly.”

“The first is, that you let me go in peace; and the next, that you trouble none of the smugglers, should they happen to be there.”

“I promise,” said the captain. “And now set about your work. But mark me, if you deceive me, by St. George I'll shoot you on the moment!”

The brig was soon put before the wind, and Robert Kintock stationed himself upon the starboard fore-yard arm, from whence his orders were passed along to the helmsman. The bounding vessel soon came within sight of the rugged crags, and the heart of every man leaped with fearful thrills as they were swept past a frowning rock which almost grazed them as they passed. On flew the brig, and thicker and more fearful became the rocks, which raised their heads on every side.

“Port!” shouted the boy.

“Port, it is.”

“Steady—so.”

“Steady, it is.”

“Starboard—quick!”

“Aye, aye, starboard, it is.”

“Steady—so.”

“Steady, it is.”

At this moment the vessel swept on past an overhanging cliff, and just as a vivid flash of lightning shot through the heavens and revealed all the horrors around, a loud shout was heard from the young pilot, and in a moment all eyes were turned towards him. He stood upon the extreme end of the yard and held himself by the lift. In a moment more he crouched down like a tiger after its prey, and then, with one leap, he reached the projecting rock.

“Revenge! revenge!” was all that the doomed men heard, and they were swept away into the boiling surge beyond.

“Breakers! a reef!” screamed the man forward.

“Starboard—quick!”

But ‘twas too late! Ere the helm was half up, a low, tremendous grating of the brig's keel was distinctly felt, and the next instant came a crash which sounded high above the roar of the elements,

and the heavy masts went sweeping away to leeward, followed in a few moments by large masses of the ill-fated vessel's wreck and cargo. Shriek after shriek went up from those doomed men, but they were in the grasp of a power that knows no mercy. The Storm King took them all for his own!

The next morning a small party of wreckers came down from the rocks and moved along the shore. It was strewn with fragments of the wreck, and here and there were scattered along the bruised and mutilated forms of the brig's crew. Among that party was Robert Kintock, and eagerly did he search among the ghastly corse, as though there was one he would have found. At length he stopped and stooped over one, upon the shoulders of which were two golden epanettes. 'Twas the captain of the brig—the murderer of his father! The boy placed his foot upon the prostrate body and while a strange light beamed from his eyes, and a shudder passed over his countenance, he muttered:

“Father, you are revenged!”

The boy spoke truly. Fearful in its conception, and fearful in its consummation, had been that “Pilot's Revenge!”

S. C. J.

THE KING OF ITALY HAS PRESENTED SIX MAGNIFICENT BLACK HORSES AND A CARROUSSIE TO THE SULTAN.

ONE OF THE SONS OF THE VICEROY OF EGYPT IS ABOUT TO BE ENTERED AS A STUDENT AT OXFORD.

OIL FLOWING WELLS SEEM TO BE AT AN END IN AMERICA, AND THE MINERAL OIL NOW IS ONLY TO BE OBTAINED BY PUMPING.

THE HALFPENNY NEWSPAPER STAMP.—At present, for the penny stamp, a newspaper may be transmitted several times through the post-office within fifteen days of the day of publication. Next year a halfpenny stamp will be required for each separate despatch through the post. It is expected that this change will partly compensate for the loss of revenue caused by the reduction of the charge. The existing rule, which prohibits the delivery of newspapers bearing an impressed stamp within the limits of the town in which it is published, will be abrogated.

WHAT FAIR DEALING DOES.—One of the most remarkable cases of legitimate business success is the result, not of a “fortunate purchase,” nor of a “real estate speculation,” but of fair dealing persisted in. Few colossal fortunes are made in a moment or a month; fortunes thus acquired are always the result of fortunes lost, bringing ruin to two parties; to the loser now, and to the winner a little later; but a fortune is amassing, and if lost, another can be made, “in the same line.” This man has three things in rare proportion—courtesy, courage, and integrity. He determined to sell good things at a low price and to let the people know it; always good, always cheap, always cash.

FRENCH IRON-CLADS AT BRIGHTON.—Curiosity was at its height last week among the inhabitants of Brighton, upon observing three French iron-clad men-of-war arrive off Brighton and anchor. At midnight the vessels were boarded by Lieutenant Storr, R.N., divisional officer of the Coast-guard, in company with Mr. G. Clarke, R.N., officer of the Brighton Station, and Mr. Heckstall Smith. The vessels were the Savoie (Admiral Dompierre), Flandre, and Gantrie. The British officers received great civility from the officers of the Savoie. This vessel is pierced for fifteen breech-loading guns—five 7-inch on her upper deck, and ten 9-inch on her lower decks; she also carries a large steam-ram on her forecastle. Her crew numbers 600 men. The vessels had previously left Torquay, came from St. Malo, and they were bound for Dunkirk, on a five days' cruise, for the purpose of training the men. The vessels left their anchorage at nine o'clock the following morning.

SALE OF SPLENDID JEWELS.—An important assemblage of costly jewels was on July 7th disposed of by Messrs. Debenham, Storr, and Sons, at their Great Metropolitan Auction Mart, in King-street, Covent-garden, before a very numerous company. Among the more brilliant objects were the following: Lot 511. A magnificent collet necklace, composed of 38 large and lustrous brilliants, the weight of each stone engraved on setting—900 guineas. 516. A court necklace, composed of 15 large and fine emeralds, surrounded with brilliants of the purest water—570 guineas. 517. A magnificent brilliant pendant—141 guineas (Troup). 521. A superb five-row necklace of fine Oriental pearls, with a magnificent sapphire and brilliant snap, to form a brooch or pendant—700 guineas. 522. An opal and brilliant heart pendant—105 guineas (Filman). 523. A brilliant pendant, with large button pearl centre—116 guineas. 526-20. A magnificent brilliant spray brooch and four smaller spray brooches, forming a complete tiara—600 guineas. 531. A piece of opal, remarkably large and fine, mounted as a brooch, with brilliants—124 guineas.

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guineas (Boore). 533. A superb court suit, consisting of a necklace, bracelet, and earrings, composed of opals and brilliants—600 guineas. 538. A magnificent brilliant bracelet—324 guineas. 539. A large brilliant spray brooch, and two smaller spray brooches, forming a complete tiara—901 guineas (Emmanuel). 544. A remarkably large and fine opal, mounted as a pendant, with brilliants of the purest water—145 guineas (Van Praag). 549. A costly brilliant, pearl, and enamel bird and serpent brooch—184 guineas (Waylatt). 552. A brilliant and pearl tiara—80 guineas (Emmanuel). 553. A sapphire and brilliant pendant—85 guineas (ditto). 555. A set of five large and lustrous brilliant stars—174 guineas (Warner). 558. A large and fine Oriental pearl, mounted between two diamond feathers, forming a "Prince of Wales's plume" brooch—86 guineas (Jones). 563. A magnificent cross, composed of 11 large and 15 smaller brilliants—290 guineas. 566. A very fine cross, composed of six large and 15 smaller brilliants—145 guineas. 570. A superb brilliant cross, composed of 12 large and 14 small stones—212 guineas. 572. A brilliant pendant—175 guineas (Russell). 573. A pair of lustrous brilliant collet earrings, with coronet tops—139 guineas (Jones). 574. A set of three large and lustrous brilliant stars—154 guineas (Spencer). 575. A matchless brilliant, weighing 18 grains, mounted as a ring—190 guineas (Roberts). 576. A brilliant of extraordinary size, mounted as a ring—125 guineas (Hills). The whole realised the large sum of 12,596L.

PEARLS IN IRISH MUSSELS.

By the kindness of "Nahanik" I have received two very fine specimens of pearls in freshwater mussels. In No. 1 the pearl was found in the mantle; it is about the size of a sweet pea; it is at that end of the shell where bright pearls are usually found; the natives say that a pearl found at this end of the mantle, ought to be bright.

The formation of this pearl seems to have been due to a crack in the shell, traces of which can still be seen externally running across its whole breadth. Inside the shell (corresponding to the external marking) depression is plainly visible. This forms a continuous rut or groove nearly an inch in length. At the farther end of this rut is a hollow into which the pearl exactly fits. It therefore seems probable that this pearl was formed at some distance inside the mantle and that the creature had for some time past been attempting gradually to push it out. This it managed to arrange, until the pearl arrived at the extreme edge of the shell. The animal mantle extended no further than the point, and therefore could push it outwards no longer; the shell then grew round outside the pearl, thus forming the hollow which is so plainly perceptible; in this the pearl was probably found resting when first opened. It is also very possible that the inner layers of this pearl may be found to be bright, and that it has received its brown coat from remaining some little time in proximity (or rather in the actual substance) of a portion of the shell which is naturally of a brown colour.

In specimen No. 2 the pearl is not loose, but fixed in the substance of the shell, very near its outer margin. It is of a dark purple colour, and highly iridescent; in size it is about as large as a split pea; in this case also there is a furrow on the inner side, which corresponds to what appears to have been a bending rather than a fracture of the shell.

On submitting this specimen to the magnifying glass I find that the layers of nacreous matter are deposited about it in such a manner as almost to induce me to believe that this pearl also was once loose, and that it had been pushed outwards as in the preceding case, but instead of resting in a hollow it has become blocked up and fixed permanently into the hollow. Both shells are crooked and ugly-looking, and in such, as "Nahanik" reports, pearls are sure to be found, although they occur also in well-shaped shells. I am much obliged to "Nahanik" for his specimens; these pearls were much appreciated by the Romans, and one reason for Julius Caesar having undertaken his expedition to England is said to have been "Propter Margaritas Anglicas."

July 7, 1869.

F. B.

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL INCOMES.—The 680,429L expended from the Parliamentary grant for education in the year ending the 31st of March, 1868, was applied as follows: To schools connected with the Church of England, 387,134L; with the British and Foreign School Society, 66,017L; Wesleyan schools, 32,611L; Roman Catholic schools in England, 29,751L; and in Scotland, 3,161L; schools connected with the Established Church of Scotland, 48,573L; with the Free Church of Scotland, 28,366L; with the Episcopal Church in Scotland, 3,717L; parochial union schools in England, 120L; expenses of administration of the grant and inspection, 80,979L. A return stating for

the the year ending August 31, 1868, the actual income of 8,937 schools in Great Britain receiving annual grants from the Parliamentary vote, and having an average attendance of 1,197,975L, shows that they received the largest item of their income, 508,772L, from the school pence; from the government, 484,010L; from voluntary contributions (the schools having 194,745 subscribers), 443,523L; 66,820L from endowment, and 43,808L from various sources, brought the whole income of the year to 1,546,933L. The expenditure rather exceeded that amount, and averaged 1L 5s. 11d. per scholar. This statement appears to include evening schools as well as day schools—such schools receiving annual grants as have sent sufficient returns of income and expenditure.

SYLVIA.

THE drawing-room door closed upon Henry Esterly, and left Sylvia Lauriston sitting alone in her carved-back, velvet-covered chair, with the folds of her crimson dress sweeping heavily about her, and training upon the soft, thick carpet which covered the floor. Miss Lauriston's colour was heightened, and her eyes were particularly bright, as she listened to her visitor's retreating footsteps. When these were insatiable she rose, walked abstractedly across the room, and pausing before a table, bent over a vase of flowers upon it, and inhaled their fragrance with a sort of tenderness. It was a simple but unconsciously a very expressive act,—the flowers had preceded Mr. Esterly's arrival by a couple of hours, and were accompanied by his card.

It was about three o'clock in the afternoon. Within the drawing-room a subdued and tinted light prevailed, and the faint odour of exotics was diffused. The room was large and elegant, graceful, tasteful, luxurious. Miss Lauriston, with her passionate gray eyes and purple-black hair, with her scarlet lips and haughty head, and regal air, looked slowly about her, seeming to note individually the luxuries which surrounded her.

"It is none of it mine," she said to herself, "yet what should I do without it?"

She heaved a low sigh, and went on her way from the room and up to Mrs. Lauriston's chamber. Mrs. Lauriston was her uncle's wife, and Sylvia was an orphan, and dependent upon her relatives.

Mrs. Lauriston stood before her glass, putting on her French bonnet.

"Is it possible, Sylvia," she inquired, "that Henry Esterly has only just gone? He has been here two hours—much too long a call for any gentleman, except a lover."

"It was rather a long call," returned the young lady, languidly, carefully concealing the expression of pleasure and excitement her face had worn.

"Yes, I presume, though, he did not stay without encouragement," returned Mrs. Lauriston, dryly. "And, Sylvia, he must not stay so again, unless he is going to marry you," she added, conclusively.

"Marry me!" echoed the girl. "Why, aunt, I have not known him quite a week!"

"Don't talk nonsense, Sylvia; the length of your acquaintance is of no consequence. You danced with him all one night, went to the opera with him the next, walked the length of the avenue with him yesterday morning, and have just finished a two-hour tête-à-tête. Attentions enough for a whole engagement crowded into four days! And let me assure you that it must go no farther. Mr. Esterly has seen quite enough of you to estimate you. If he wishes to propose for you, he is at liberty to do so. If he does not, no one knows better than yourself that you cannot afford to comprise yourself by flirtation."

Sylvia said nothing. Her aunt's words were strictly true. No one knew better than she that marriage was her only hope; that she could not afford to lessen her chances by unfruitful flirtations. Her silence seemed rather to irritate Mrs. Lauriston.

"I have never seen a girl," she went on, "situated as you are, Sylvia, who was so impolitic. If I had the remotest notion that Henry Esterly had touched your heart, I should try to be considerate and tender with you, but I am convinced that you have no heart to be touched. He is of a good family, and will have a nice fortune," said Mrs. Lauriston, with whom fortune and family covered a multitude of sins.

"If Henry Esterly had touched my heart," responded Sylvia, with the quiet deliberation which made her manner so puzzling, "I should need your pity more than anything else."

"What do you mean?"

"He is dissipated and unprincipled," returned the girl, in an intense, bitter tone.

"Sylvia, you shock me! I should like to know, then, why you receive such attention from him?" exclaimed Mrs. Lauriston.

"Well, partly because I like them," said Sylvia. "He has only shown me attention because his father and mine were old friends," she added.

"I do not believe that," rejoined her relative. "By the way, did you mention to him the letter and invitation you received this morning from his mother?"

"No, I did not."

"Why not, pray?"

Sylvia hesitated, and then said, frankly:

"I thought it would seem like inviting him to follow me."

"But of course he must know it if you go to visit his mother."

"He need not. He is very seldom at home, and as he is going to Brighton for the next three months, he will not be aware of my absence from home."

"You speak as if you had fully made up your mind to pay Mrs. Esterly the visit she proposes to you," said Mrs. Lauriston.

"Yes, I have. I don't think you will mind my absence for two or three months, and for my own part I am weary of everything, and want a change."

"You will want still another, I fancy, when you have been buried down in the country for a week, with no company but stately old Mrs. Esterly, and such of the village people as call to get patterns of your clothes."

"You forget that Mrs. Esterly has another son, who lives at home," said Sylvia.

"True enough; but something ails him. What is it that I have heard about him?"

"Nothing, I believe, but that he is a bachelor, and leads a secluded life."

"Oh! Well, you may be able to endure it for three months, but I shall expect you back in as many days."

Sylvia leaned her head wearily upon her hand, watching her aunt as she went through her toilette preparations. As she said, she was tired of everything; tired of her life, her ambitions, her flirtations—worse than all, tired of herself. She was capable of better things than she had accomplished, and in her soul's core she was weary of her empty heart and idle life. In any other mood she would hardly have left the gaieties to which she was accustomed, to pay a visit to the old lady, upon whose hospitality she had no claim but in the fact that a warm friendship had once existed between her parents and the Esterlys. But as it was, she decided to go, and on a drizzling February day she started on her journey, and after a few hours' ride she stepped from the train at the station of the village a mile distant from Mrs. Esterly's estate, which bore the name of Riverside.

She had made the short journey alone, anticipating to be met at the station. But the carriage and coachman were alone in waiting, and with a somewhat depressed and dreary feeling, and a vague expectation of realising her aunt's predictions, after all, she was driven along the muddy road to her destination. Mrs. Esterly's rheumatism would not permit her to meet her guest except at the door of her sitting-room; there however, her greeting was sufficiently cordial. Sylvia's wrappings were taken off, she was placed in the warmest corner beside the fire, her hair was stroked, her features criticised, and her resemblance to her father discussed at length, till tea-time brought an interruption. The two ladies partook of the meal alone, and afterwards returned to the sitting-room to renew the topics before mentioned. The evening wore slowly away, and Sylvia's civility was hardly tasked to prevent her yawning, when at length a masculine tread was heard approaching, and John Esterly entered his mother's room.

"This is my eldest son," was Mrs. Esterly's introduction; and Miss Lauriston rose and extended her hand to a small, plain man with penetrating eyes, an overhanging brow and despotic mouth—the complete opposite in looks and manner of his handsome, brilliant younger brother.

Mr. Esterly was chary of his gifts—whatever they might be—for entertaining. Sylvia learned during the half-hour he sat with them that it was his custom to play a game of chess every evening with his mother, but that in deference to her recent arrival the game would be dispensed with to-night. Farther than this she did not learn. Bedtime was welcomed joyfully, and she went to her room with the impression that she had had a dull time thus far. She examined her chamber, which, like all the belongings of the house, was opulent and elegant, and then sat down before the fire to recall the events of the day.

Over the mantelpiece she saw, as she raised her eyes, two medallion photographs—the boy-likenesses of the two Esterlys. She examined them mechanically

—the one handsome, spirited, joyous, with brilliant hazel eyes and brown, wavy hair; the other grave, thoughtful, distrustful, the face of one who suspects easily and feels ardently. She turned her eyes from them, but her mind continued to busy itself about them. Then she proceeded to puzzle herself as to why Mrs. Esterly had not once mentioned her younger son during the evening. She must know that Henry and herself were acquainted. Could it be possible that she suspected they had been flirting, and was displeased therewith? She felt a little indignant at such an idea. In the morning, however, this idea was dispelled. Mrs. Esterly came to her chamber to take her to breakfast, and Sylvia said, with a defiant glance at the picture:

"What a handsome boy your younger son must have been!"

"Yes," said Mrs. Esterly, gravely; "I presume you would think him much handsomer than John, if you should see him."

If she should see him! So then Henry had not thought his acquaintance with herself of sufficient consequence to speak of it in writing to his mother. What motive could he have had for his silence, Sylvia wondered as she proceeded to the dining-room; and with the feeling that since he had made her of so little importance, she would make him of no more, she forbore to mention his name.

The following days seemed long and stupid. It appeared not unlikely that her visit would terminate as her aunt had foretold. Mrs. Esterly's stateliness appeared like patronage, and John's avoidance like dislike. But destiny and Mrs. Esterly's rheumatism came to her relief. One morning her hostess was unable to come to breakfast, her maid presented her apologies, with the request that Miss Lauriston would pour the coffee for Mr. John, and Sylvia found herself for the first time *tête-à-tête* with her host. Now it is quite easy for a party of three to be very civil and still very reserved towards one another; but two left to each other's mercies must be absolutely rude or tolerably confidential. John Esterly and his guest became the last. They sat a good while over their breakfast, and fell to asking one another questions which led to disclosures of sentiments and tastes.

"How shall you spend the morning, since my mother is ill?" he asked, as Sylvia at length rose.

Her lips curled a little—she could not help it.

"I daresay I shall do about the same as usual; that is, talk to the canary, and read a few more pages in my novel," she answered.

Something in her tone caused him to look at her narrowly.

"You are finding it rather dull here, Miss Lauriston," he said. "I am afraid we do too little to entertain you. If you will come to my study with me, you can look over my cabinet of curiosities this morning."

She was willing enough to accept the invitation, but when within the study she did not look over the curiosities; on the contrary, John Esterly and herself continued the questioning and answering and general process of getting acquainted they had begun at breakfast. They found the process interesting, evidently, for from that time Miss Lauriston was invited every morning to Mr. Esterly's study—to write her letters and look at the papers, he said.

"I am afraid I shall intrude upon your time," she had remarked, one day.

"I can have my books always," he answered, "but very seldom the companionship of a companionable woman."

"That is at least your fault, and not your misfortune," she replied, lightly.

"I believe it is my fate" he rejoined.

"Oh, Mr. Esterly!"

"Why do you say 'Oh, Mr. Esterly'?"

"Because it seems to me nonsense to lay everything to fate, and I did not think you were either morbid or nonsensical," she answered, promptly.

"Perhaps if you understood my temperament better, you would not call it nonsense," he returned.

"Redeem yourself, then, by explaining what your temperament is," she laughed.

"Shall I, really?" he asked.

"Certainly, if you can," she responded.

"When I said I could rarely have the companionship of a woman—of a woman whose companionship I desired—I spoke advisedly, Miss Lauriston; and when I attributed the deprivation to fate, I spoke advisedly also. I am so exacting by nature, that I have never trusted myself to fall in love. I have avoided woman lest I should love them. Is that sufficient explanation?"

"I should not suppose you very exacting," answered Sylvia, not knowing exactly what to say.

"Should you not? I don't mean that I am tyrannical, but that my standard is so high that I have at times despaired of having it realised. Yet after all the most that I should ask of the woman I sought for my wife is, that she be the soul of truth—that I might read her heart as through crystal—that there be no prevarication, no deception between us. Do you think that is a great deal to expect, Miss Lauriston?"

"Not so much that you need utterly despair, Mr. Esterly."

"You are inclined to be satirical," he rejoined. "Perhaps you will congratulate me when I tell you that since my acquaintance with you, my despair has been modified somewhat."

She was too well trained to show any confusion at this speech. Men often said such things which meant nothing. Still she could not help recalling and pondering over the words, and as she did so the conviction stole into her heart that she had never yet seen a man who seemed to her so fitted to be trusted and honoured and even loved as John Esterly.

Time passed and strengthened this conviction; it passed and completed the removal of Mr. Esterly's despair. Miss Lauriston had been but a little over a month at Riverside when she received a proposal to become its future mistress. On looking back subsequently she almost wondered at the amount of contentment that was crowded into that month, and at the revelations and assurances it had brought. So crowded, indeed, had it been with happiness, that she had almost forgotten the little episode of her acquaintance with the brother of her lover, and the fact that his acquaintance remained unspoken; she almost forgot, in fact, all the feverish intrigues and excitement that made up her past life; she grew better than herself—that is, truer, freer from the artificialities and deceptions which had formerly been forced upon her till they were like grafts upon the natural integrity of her disposition.

But the little cloud, no bigger than a man's hand, came at length into the horizon. It was at the dinner-table one day that Mr. Esterly said, carelessly, to his mother:

"I had a letter from Henry this morning. He is coming home, he says, for a few days."

A sudden crimson flushed Sylvia's face; she bent over her plate, confused by the sudden consciousness that her previous acquaintance and intimacy with Henry Esterly had suddenly become an unpleasant and awkward secret. She had avoided speaking of it because of its small importance; she dare not speak of it now.

If John had been less sensitive and suspicious she could have easily explained her silence, but she was so loath to cause him to feel that she had concealed anything from him, that dread of paining him led her to an actual concealment. John would say, "How strange, Sylvia, that you have not spoken of this before," and she would have nothing to answer. She hated herself for her cowardice and her fears, but she could not conquer them. From that time it became her dominant thought how she should circumvent the difficulty she dared not meet, and she finally decided that it would be best to tell Henry just how the concealment had happened, and to agree with him to let their previous acquaintance still remain unknown! It was a dangerous and distasteful resource, but it was the only one which did not involve the risk of exciting John's jealousy and suspicion; and having determined upon it, she waited upon Henry's coming with a mixture of reluctance and impatience.

The afternoon of the day which had been appointed for his coming arrived. No particular mention had been made of his coming, no special preparation for his arrival. The more polished and brilliant of the Esterlys was evidently without honour in his own home.

Sylvia asked no questions, and was ignorant of the precise hour when he would come, but in the meantime she counted the hours, and perplexed herself with plans for securing an early interview, till she grew fairly nervous.

About the middle of that afternoon, while her hostess was taking her customary nap, and John had gone to the village, she repaired to the drawing-room to try the piano, which had been newly tuned, and to endeavour to equalise her spirits. As she entered the room a man was standing upon the hearth-rug, gazing into the fire. He turned suddenly, and she found her self face to face with the object of her thoughts.

"Mr. Esterly!"

He made a profound formal bow, and met her look of surprise with his brilliant, audacious smile.

"You did not expect to find me here, Miss Lauriston?" he asked.

"I did not, certainly, if—"

"If you had, you would not have come?"

She made a desperate effort for composure. To her guilty conscience the words sounded like sarcasm. But she took courage from the fact that the opportunity in regard to which she had been uneasy was hers, and she resolved to use it quickly and briefly. She replied with her eyes fixed full upon his face:

"I think I should have come, Mr. Esterly. I wished particularly to see you."

His face expressed some slight surprise, and a certain egotistical satisfaction.

"This is an even more auspicious welcome than I had dared to hope for, Miss Lauriston. Permit me, upon the strength of it, to say that the anticipation of some such welcome from you was my sole motive for coming to Riverside just at present."

His boldness, and what she felt to be his insolence—for he knew her to be his brother's betrothed wife—made her feel keenly the humiliation of the confidence she was about to repose in him.

"I could certainly offer you no less than a cordial welcome to your own home, Mr. Esterly," she said, with dignity, after an instant's pause, "but still my words were not intended to convey it. My desire to see you is rather connected with the past than the present."

His eyes flashed with a kind of exultation. Headed towards her, extending his hand, his whole demeanour changed from deferential formality to privileged freedom.

"Sylvia, the past—" he began, in those musical tones to which she had once listened with pleasant thrills. But they excited no pleasure now. They only made her hate herself and hate the speaker. She lifted her hand deprecatingly.

"Pray be silent, Mr. Esterly. It is I who must speak; not you."

He paused, but she felt the difficulty of her position so keenly that she could not proceed for a moment, and leaning by one hand against a table near which she stood, she covered her face with the other.

"Mr. Esterly, I am about to appeal on my own behalf to your generosity," she said.

He stood close beside her now.

"Surely, Sylvia, it cannot pain or annoy you to do that?" he answered, in those sweet, sincere tones he could use so insincerely.

"It pains and annoys me exceedingly," she replied, and paused, wishing she had not begun.

"Is the demand, then, so great?" he asked. "Believe me, it cannot be greater than my desire to gratify it."

"It is not great at all," she answered, with a kind of impatience and a feeling of desperation, at the same time shrinking away from his approach. "I dislike to make it only because I fear you will misunderstand me."

"I do not think I can misunderstand you, Sylvia," he said, pointedly.

It seemed to her at this juncture that she heard the sound of a man's footstep retreating through the hall. She caught her breath. No; it was only her nervous fancy. But she must make haste. John might return at any moment. She had gone too far now to withhold her confidence, if she would. She must get through with it somehow.

"What I am about to say may sound very oddly—I daresay it will," she began. "I hope you will be able to construe it as I wish you to, Mr. Esterly."

He began to feel that something important was coming, and he gave her his attention silently.

"I cannot stop now to explain how the concealment has come about," she went on, "but neither your mother nor your brother are aware that we have ever met previously. It would seem singular, too, for them to discover it just now, and what I have to request is that you will allow them to remain in ignorance of it."

He had been puzzled as to what was coming. He was still more puzzled now. He looked at her keenly to ascertain what had been her true motive for avoiding to mention him. Had she loved him—loved him so hopelessly and deeply that she could not trust herself to speak of him? That was the most rational conclusion. If it was the right one, she must love him still, and the first thought which crossed his mind was that it might be in his power to thwart and disappoint his older brother. John had been a thorn in his side from boyhood; he had been held over him as a contrast and example in their early years; he had monopolised their father's confidence, and their mother's affections in their maturity. Here perhaps was a chance for revenge. He might support and rob him of his bride, and a fiendish kind of satisfaction came into his heart.

"Miss Lauriston," he began, and their eyes looked straight and steadily into one another's, "do not imagine that I shall seek to pry into your motives; I only bow and obey. Have no uneasiness that I shall claim your recognition on the grounds of our past relations. But I have one little exactation to make in return. As no one shall learn from me that we were formerly friends, so no one must learn it from you?"

"It would be strange if I wished to make it known after thus humbling myself to secure concealment," she replied.

"You promise me that you will not?"

"Certainly," was her answer.

The sound of approaching footsteps was unmistakable now. Sylvia walked hastily to the window, and in a moment the Misses Macrene were shown in. It occurred then suddenly to Sylvia that Mrs Esterly had sent out a few invitations for that evening, a dozen or so perhaps, for a quadrille party. The young ladies who had just arrived lived at a considerable distance, and had been asked to come early. Mrs Esterly soon came in to welcome her guests, and was somewhat surprised to find her son, whom she had not looked for till by a late train. Sylvia took advantage of the little bustle occasioned by the meetings to slip away, and she did not return to the drawing-room until a servant had been sent to inquire the cause of her delay. The invited guests were all assembled when she came. Henry Esterly went to the piano with Julia Macrene. Sylvia was inveigled into a round game of cards with Helen Macrene as manager, and John stood at the back of his mother's chair, looking on. The round game lagged in interest, and the manager proposed another, with which she alone was familiar.

"It is a perfectly infatuating game," she declared, "but we need another hand. Why, there is Mr. John Esterly doing nothing!" she cried, glancing about the room. "Pray, Miss Lauriston, ask him to join us."

Sylvia felt no hesitation or embarrassment in rising and walking to where her lover stood, and preferring the request.

"I am tired to-night, Sylvia," he said, "and do not feel like playing. Can you not excuse me?"

She looked at him with surprise, for the answer was unlike him.

"It is not to me you must make your excuses, John," she answered; "it is to your mother's guests."

"I cannot play," he returned, closing his eyes quickly a moment; "I am not well, and I cannot play."

"What is the matter? You were well this morning."

"This morning? Yes; but do go back to them. How strangely it must look to see you standing here as if you were coaxing me."

She resented his words and tone.

"I certainly shall not coax you to entertain your own guests," she replied, turning away.

She was annoyed at having to convey his refusal. Like every woman, she was hurt at having him display his indifference towards her requests. There was a little delay among the group to which she belonged, in the midst of which Julia Macrene left the piano, and Sylvia found Henry Esterly standing beside her.

"So he would not do as you asked him?" he said, in a low tone, with irony in his voice and a smile in his eyes.

She reddened.

"What are you talking of, Mr. Esterly?"

"Mr. Esterly," he repeated. "Do not be so formal. We shall be near, and I hope dear to one another, some day."

"We need not anticipate, however. I am not accustomed to call gentlemen by their first names."

"You mean not those who are strangers to you?" he asked.

Miss Lauriston bit her lip.

"Do you intend taking an advantage of my having asked a favour of you, Mr. Esterly?" she said, with prompt dignity.

"Sylvia," he returned, with his bold eyes fixed admiringly upon her, "I intend to do nothing to make myself disagreeable to you."

"Then go away from me," she returned, with more of her old coquettish manner than she had hitherto used towards him.

He laughed, bowed, and obeyed her, going to talk to his mother. Julia Macrene glided into his place.

"You are really quite enviable, Miss Lauriston," she said, "to have both the rich Esterly and the handsome Esterly at your feet."

For an instant Sylvia thought she must have heard that "the handsome Esterly," as she termed Henry, had been in truth at her feet, and she was confused. She contrived to answer:

"You draw invidious distinctions, Miss Macrene, between my two friends."

Miss Macrene shrugged her shoulders, and made no reply.

It was a dreary sort of evening to Sylvia. It seemed as if everybody was pecking at her; as though they exulted in the way her lover had refused her request, and in his manifest inattention throughout the evening. She thought she must have offended him in her last reply to his refusal, and she watched him covertly, hoping to catch his eye and bring him to her. But she did not once succeed. Even when the party was breaking up, and when subsequently the family were separating for the night, he avoided her, looking jaded and ill.

She was late to breakfast the following morning, and found Henry waiting for her alone. His brother had been called to the village on business, and had taken a cup of coffee quite early. Henry made no allusions. He chatted cheerfully in his agreeable way, and whiled away the time.

"I was at the stable when John started this morning," he said, "and was quite surprised to find you had not ridden Bess, the little brown filly, since you have been here. She is a charming little horse."

"Your brother never rides for pleasure," she answered. "We have driven out whenever the roads were fit."

"They are in good condition to-day," Henry continued, "and I proposed to John to let me take you to 'Maiden's Ford' this afternoon. He would be glad to have us go, for he expected to be busy with his lawyer hunting up some titles."

Sylvia looked penetratively at "the handsome Esterly," but found nothing but polite admiration in his face. She was half uneasy at John's readiness to dispose of her, and at his unusual neglect; but she was after all pleased with the idea of a long ride, and rather relieved that her lover was so ready to have her go—as it indicated the absence of any suspicion that his brother might admire her beyond his desire.

"If we go," Henry continued, "we must start directly after luncheon, for it grows cold towards evening."

Sylvia demurred. "We will decide by-and-bye," she said.

"That means," retorted her companion, "after you learn whether your future lord and master is willing."

"By no means," she replied. "Mr. Esterly would probably ridicule me for asking his advice upon such a subject, if I should see fit to do so. The matter of a ride is hardly important enough for a consultation."

"You don't mean that you would go without consulting him?"

It was weak and foolish for Sylvia to answer as she did, but she was much too proud to let Henry imagine that she had been won without being wooed; that she was John Esterly's patient plaything; that she was too deeply impressed with her luck in getting him to exercise any independence, and she said, "Certainly, with a compression of her lips.

"Decide, then, will you not?"

"I suppose the filly is safe?"

"Undoubtedly, or John would have mentioned it."

"I have no objection to going."

"I shall give the orders, then."

"I beg your pardon, but as it is your brother's horse, I should rather the order came from him."

Henry bit his lip, and said: "Oh, very well."

But it was destined that the elder Esterly should give no orders concerning his stable that day. At dinner time a brief note came to his mother, saying that he should be detained in the village with his lawyer, who was preparing for an important and annoying lawsuit. Sylvia thought there might have been some message for her, but there was none, and half in anger and half in weariness she yielded to Henry's importunities, and at three o'clock found herself mounted upon Brown Bess, her head turned towards "Maiden's Ford." She was dissatisfied before she started, more than dissatisfied now that she had done so, but the excitement of managing the horse, and the stimulant of the fresh air of the March afternoon blowing against her face, kept up her spirits.

"I suppose there is a story and a romance connected with 'Maiden's Ford'?" she said, as they broke into a long, brisk canter.

"Yes—an uncanny one," replied her companion.

"Tell it me," she said.

"I dare not. They say it brings bad luck to the teller."

"You do not mean that you care for these superstitions?"

"I will tell you this much," he equivocated; "it is fatal to the love of the lovers who cross it in company, but as we are not lovers, Sylvia, we may venture!"

"It is a lovely ride anyway. I think John must be a little superstitious, or he would have brought me here."

"Perhaps he may bring you yet."

"When we have ceased to be lovers?—that will be some time to wait."

Henry Esterly flashed a dark, bad look into her brilliant face with its wind-blown roses.

"Sylvia," he said, "I dreamed last night that you and John were no longer lovers."

"What had happened?" she asked, with a light laugh.

"You had quarrelled," he replied, briefly.

"It would not be easy for John and me to quarrel," she returned, rather thoughtfully.

"Have you found him so forbearing?"

"I don't know about that, but I think we understand each other's dispositions very well."

"You do?" He looked at her piercingly as they rode side by side. "I thought last night that you did not understand each other at all. I thought, Sylvia, that you were either very indifferent to my brother, or very dull in your perception of his character, or you would never have run the risk you have."

"What do you mean?"

"Must I explain myself further? In the confidence you have bestowed upon me you have sown the seeds of separation. John is the most sensitive and suspicious of men. He will not endure deceit."

"Yes," she replied, "I suppose I have used deceit—the turn is none too harsh, and you are making me feel, what I should have known I would feel, that the way of the transgressor is hard. I thought my deception would be harmless—that it would save pain instead of causing it. I might have known better. There is nothing safe but the truth."

"You are learning to moralise, Miss Lauriston. I have acquired the knack myself—when it was too late," sneered he.

His words stung Sylvia into defiance.

"Perhaps you will congratulate me that in my case it is not too late?" she said, loftily.

"I do not perceive that I can," he returned.

Her colour was heightened, her eyes flashed. She was both angry and indignant.

"I will enable you to perceive it as soon as we get home," she said, hastily. "I do not intend that you shall use your power over me much longer, Mr. Esterly. I mean to tell your brother everything tonight."

He was as calm as she was excited.

"I am sorry, Sylvia," he replied, quite gently, "to have to remind you that the pledge to secrecy concerning our past was mutual. Neither of us was to tell."

With a sudden start she tightened her rein so that her horse stopped, and that of her companion imitated the example. She was pale enough, too.

"What have I done?" she cried to herself, suddenly realising that she had placed herself but too truly in Henry's power.

"I will tell you, Sylvia," was his answer; "you have done a very foolish thing," and he contemplated the effect of his words with a sort of triumph. "You have done what must alienate you and my brother for ever."

"Henry!" she cried, piteously, betrayed into addressing him by his first name by her agitation, "you would not—"'

"I would not voluntarily have done anything to cause trouble between you, but you, yourself, have thrust the opportunity upon me, and I need not remind you that the temptation to use it already existed."

"What temptation?" she asked, "can be strong enough to make you so unfair?"

"The temptation to win you for myself, Miss Lauriston," he replied.

"Never!" she said, and shuddered.

"Do not be so hasty," he returned. "My position is not so contemptible as your treatment would indicate. Sylvia, you and I are proper mates; we know the world, and are adapted to scorn it and influence it together. But—sentiment aside—think of your position in a practical way—you have lost John Esterly's confidence, and with it his heart and hand. Mortifying, but none the less inevitable. Put a bold front upon it. Discard him before he discards you, and console yourself for the elder brother with the younger."

"If I could help myself, Mr. Esterly, I should not even listen to your ungentlemanly proposals," she replied.

"That is precisely the point," was his answer; "you cannot help yourself. You are in my power, Miss Lauriston, and sooner or later you will have to



[THE MAIDEN'S FORD.]

allow that fact its weight. If I did not love you, the fact would be unimportant; but I do love you, and I am determined, by foul means or fair, to have you for my wife."

In spite of the fear she felt she looked him full in the face at this, and said, steadily:

"You have been drinking, Henry Esterly. When you are sober, you will regret and recall what has passed during this ride."

He did not return her look. He said:

"Here is the ford before us. I fancy we shall both be somewhat sobered by our passage across. I am going to fasten the horses together by this check line."

"No, I will not permit it."

"You will need all the help I can give you. Don't you see what a current there is?" he exclaimed, angrily.

"Yes, I see. Are you going to take me in there?"

"It is safe enough if the horses don't get frightened, and they will not be so apt to together."

His words sounded sensible enough, but Sylvia was firm.

"I will take my chance alone, if we must cross here," she said.

"Of course we will cross," he replied. "We are not lovers, so there can be no danger," he added, with a sneering laugh.

They were standing at the water's edge. The stream was much swollen, and was rushing along with frightful rapidity. Both horses swerved, with eyes and nostrils dilated, and planted their fore feet in the bank as though in refusal to take the stream. Sylvia's filly, like all thoroughbred animals, showed pluck even with the appreciation of danger, while Henry's beast, though the more mettlesome, was more obstinate in the emergency.

"Let us turn back," pleaded Sylvia.

"Nonsense; we should be ridiculed for ever."

"I am afraid," she added.

He was spurring his horse, which reared and curvetted, and could not be urged into the water.

"He will follow Bess, if you would only start her," he said.

"Oh, I dare not! It looks so frightful!" she answered, thoroughly alarmed at his rashness.

He muttered something which the roar of the water drowned. At the same moment his horse swerved beside hers, and—whether by chance or intention she never knew—Bess received a sharp cut from his descending whip. She sprang forward. Sylvia had barely time to secure her seat and gather her habit skirt in her hand, when she found her horse breast-deep among the waves, and Henry's only a head's length behind.

The roar and force of the waters was frightful, and in an instant they were both aware that they had mis-calculated the depth of the stream. The horses lost their footing, and were struggling for life towards the opposite bank. Sylvia drooped her rein, and flung her arms around her horse's neck. She was scarcely sensible of anything but her own imminent danger, yet a dim knowledge came across her that Henry was not following her. She tried to hold a little tighter; the waters dashed in her face, and she knew nothing farther.

Opening her eyes, she found herself lying on the ground, her head supported by a man's shawl, and in an instant she recognised John Esterly bending over her, and by her side, with a finger on her pulse, a physician belonging to the village.

It seemed that Dr. Phillips was returning from visiting some patient, when he discovered Miss Lanson lying in the road, unconscious, her clothes drip-

ping, her hat gone, and with every evidence of having fallen from her horse. He of course at once went to her assistance, and while endeavouring to bring her out of her swoon was joined by Mr. Esterly, who had been more alarmed than can easily be told, by the return to Riverside of the horses ridden by Sylvia and his brother, without either rider, and had at once started himself in one direction, and despatched a groom in another, to endeavour to discover the cause of the accident. But in the meantime where was Henry Esterly? The horses had not come together; possibly he had reached the shore lower down, and would be found by the groom, who had taken another road.

Dr. Phillips placed his chaise at Mr. Esterly's disposal, taking himself the horse the latter had ridden, and the party turned homeward. Sylvia, reclining upon the doctor's carriage furs, lay quite silent, endeavouring to regain her self-command, which had been so sorely shaken.

"Sylvia," said John, at length, "is it because you are so weak and suffering that you do not speak?"

"I am not suffering, except in mind, and my mental suffering would be relieved by speaking," was her answer.

"Why so silent, then?"

"Because silence is all that remains for me."

"What do you mean, Sylvia?"

"I mean that something has come between us, about which I must be silent for ever. I must bear to be separated from you, and to be scorned by you, Mr. Esterly, and still to keep silent for ever."

"You are excited," he said, "by what you have passed through. You do not know what you are saying; do not talk any more at present."

"I am not at all excited," she replied. "I know perfectly well what I am talking about. Has there been nothing in my conduct within the past twenty-four hours to surprise you?"

"Yes—I have been surprised," he returned, quietly.

"And you will be still more so to know that all explanation is impossible—that the mystery of my conduct must remain unexplained, and that our engagement must be broken off in consequence of it."

He looked at her keenly, and repeated:

"Our engagement must be broken off, is that what you said, Sylvia?"

"Yes," she replied. "For if you were willing to marry me, when it is not in my power to give you my entire confidence, I am too proud to allow you to."

"I do not think you can withhold your confidence from me," he answered.

"I am forced to do so. I have given a promise from which I cannot be released."

John Esterly leaned forward suddenly.

"Heaven bless you, Sylvia. I know now that in your heart you intend no deceit towards me. Your secret is mine. I was a witness to your yesterday's interview with my brother."

An ecstatic faintness came over Sylvia. She reached her arms towards her lover, her head sank upon his shoulder.

"Oh, John, you may trust me for ever. I will never again put it out of my power to tell the truth," she cried, with a wild, overwhelming gratitude.

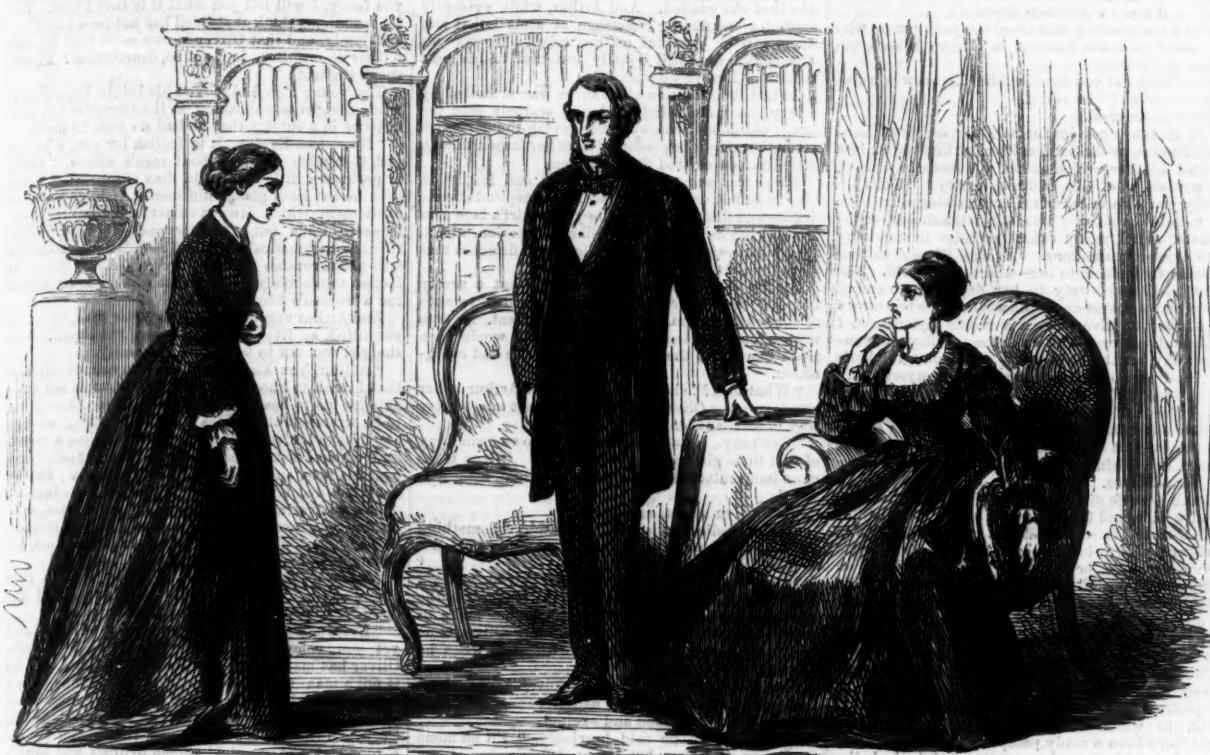
He held her closely to him. He had never trusted her so fully as at that moment, and she, perhaps, had never loved him so well.

It appeared that returning home the previous afternoon, he had in passing through the hall been attracted by the sound of Sylvia's voice in the drawing-room, and approaching to join her there, had been startled by her words—"I am about to appeal on my own behalf to your generosity," and, almost paralysed with surprise, had listened to the rest of the conversation. His suspicion, astonishment, and mortification accounted for his constraint during the evening, for his absence from home the following day. The shock was too great; he could not endure to meet the woman whom he so passionately loved, and could no longer trust.

And it is also certain that no subsequent explanation could have restored his shaken faith, but Sylvia's unconscious betrayal of her error, and the sadness with which she vowed that it must separate them, left no grounds for future mistrust, and no food for jealousy. As for Sylvia herself, the lesson was a dear one, but perhaps worth what it had cost.

The two reached home to find that Henry had been rescued half-drowned, and was being conveyed home. He confessed subsequently to Sylvia that, as she supposed, he was considerably excited by liquor before starting upon the ride. There was still some good in Henry Esterly's nature, and he could say sincerely that he was thankful that fate had spared him the reproach of having darkened the lives of Sylvia and John.

R. M.



[A NOTE FROM DANVERS.]

EVELYN'S PLOT.

CHAPTER I.

She only said : " My life is dreary ;
He cometh not," she said ;

She said : " I am awry, awry,
I would that I were dead."

Tennyson.

Here are sever'd lips,
Parted with sugar breath ; so sweet a bar
Should sunder such sweet friends. Here, in her hairs,
The painter plays the spider, and hath woven
A golden mesh to entrap the hearts of men
Faster than gnats in cobwebs. Merchant of Venice.

There are few more dazzling and bewildering spectacles than Rotten Row on a fair evening in the height of the London season. Other capitals may boast of more diversity of colour, of brighter and more picturesque costumes, and of livelier and less rigid laws of social propriety, but the favoured promenade of England's aristocracy has a character quite its own.

Never did Rotten Row look to greater advantage than on a certain brilliant evening in the latter part of May ; there was more than the general assemblage of fair women, and brave men, and the loungers on the " rail" confessed that on this particular evening the display of beauty and elegance was more than usually startling.

" Never saw more pretty girls than have come out this year," observed Clarence Fernly—a veteran admirer of the sex, and an *habitué* of stately mansions, and of *salons*—of clubs and operas—of country seats—and of fashionable watering-places, for more years than he cared to confess ; " but the display is really objectionable from the very *embarras des richesses*, so far as one's eyes are concerned. Can't say I ever had that perplexity in my banker's account."

His companion smiled.

" You are such a connoisseur in female charms, Fernly, that no wonder you are puzzled ; but, then, it is always so. Connoisseurs are most wretched creatures at all times. Always finding blemishes in music, painting, poetry, and beauty ; while I—poor unthinking, blundering admirer that I am—can enjoy everything, undisturbed by qualms of conscience or criticism. There now—can you find a fault in that face or figure ? To me, it is the very loveliest in the park to-night, and I have more than once thought before that it was about the greatest perfection of womanly, or rather feminine beauty ; for she is scarcely to be called ' woman ' yet."

Clarence Fernly put up his glass with a grave, cri-

tical inspection of the subject of his friend Frank Temple's eulogy.

It was a young girl on horseback, who happened at the moment to be passing sufficiently near for a deliberate and yet unnoticed gaze to be fixed on her face.

And a very beautiful face it was ; such as would fix, if it did not at once attract attention, even in that crowd of rival fair ones.

Features of sufficient regularity and delicacy to be called beautiful, and yet with sufficient piquancy and changefulness to be more attractive than the classic statue-like perfection of contour can ever hope to be. Eyes, that might be dark hazel, or dark gray, but were certainly large and bewitchingly bright and full, and a mouth that could express the most winning sweetness, the greatest decision, or the most touching pensiveness of mood. And it could smile gaily, and archly too, but those smiles were more rare than any other variation of the changing expression.

But the skin was perhaps the rarest charm of the face.

Creamy in tint, but without a *suspicion* of the faded hue that such skins sometimes wear ; and touched by the most delicate of vermilion, which deepened into a rich glow at the least excitement.

It was a complexion at once so delicate and soft, and yet so varying, that it continually changed the aspect of the girl's beauty, with an ever new charm.

The figure to which this fair face belonged was symmetrical and graceful—perhaps somewhat too fragile for perfect beauty, but yet promising the full development of womanly roundness in the course of years.

Evelyn Rivers was as yet but in her first spring-tide—eighteen years had not elapsed since her eyes opened on the light—not time enough for the richness of the flower to expand from the lovely bud.

Clarence Fernly removed his glass with a suggestive :

" Ah, yes—very good."

" But, who is she ? and those young men who are along with her in the Ride ? " asked Frank Temple, eagerly, as the young girl bowed her adieux to a gentleman, with whom her companions had been talking for some minutes. " By Jove, how well she rides ! " he added, as the party cantered off.

" Who is she ? Why—the niece of old Danvers. You know him, surely ? "

" No more than I do my great grandfather ; I plead as usual utter ignorance. Take pity on me, Clarence,

and give me some crumbs of your superior knowledge, to satisfy my lack of that most useful commodity."

" Well, it's not quite so wonderful as some of your unknowingness, Frank," was the gracious reply ; " for Danvers is rather a peculiar story. He is of an old family—very old—and stainless. But he was a younger son, and poor. So, instead of going into the Church for a starvation living, or to the Bar—to eat his own fingers off, as well as his head—he chose to go into some mysterious *métier*—understood, I suppose, in the city, but which is too fatiguing for my comprehension—something between a banker and merchant, and speculator—and managing to pick up a very comfortable sum among the three callings ; retired with sufficient to keep a town house, and buy a country place ; besides odd luxuries such as maintaining a pretty niece, and handsome nephew, and a far-away cousin, as his own children."

" Then that was her brother—I mean the one to whom she was talking while they remained opposite to us ? "

" Not a bit. That young man was her cousin, the son of old Mark ; he must be over thirty, and the other a good deal younger. Her brother was on the other side, flirting with Lady Alice Farrington. He knows a deuced deal better than to waste his time with a sister, I can tell you."

" A scapgegrace, I suppose ? "

" Hem ! well, a lad of spirit, or a ne'er-do-well, just as people take these things. Any way, he is a handsome young fellow, and beats the son of old Mark hollow."

" And where is the uncle ? Doesn't he look after his pretty niece a little ? I suppose she is an orphan from what you say ? "

" Yes—I think worse, for old Mark is a perfect nonentity. A fit of paralysis knocked him over some time ago, and he is a regular imbecile, I fancy—just an automaton that plays propriety, and allows the fair Evelyn to remain in the house of an uncle, when she could not in that of a cousin."

" And the son ? "

" Oliver manages the family affairs, which I believe are still rather those of a mercantile man than a gentleman. The young cousin is to go into the army ; at least he has been studying for it, but I suppose he finds the fair Evelyn's bright eyes quite killing enough without any other artillery, for he doesn't push for a commission."

Frank Temple was silent for a few moments, while Clarence Fernly turned the everlasting eyeglass on some more nearly approaching beauty, who flung a

sunny smile at the "dear old chick," on whom the *préte* of many a *débutante* depended.

When the greeting was over, the young man who had taken so much interest in Evelyn Rivers, returned to the subject.

"And why did you say that Miss Rivers was worse than an orphan?" he asked.

Clarence laughed.

"Is it the legal instincts of an incipient Lord Chief Justice, or the sudden love, at first sight, of a devoted admirer, which makes you so curious about the genealogy of this budding beauty? Well, I'll gratify you this once, but I hate talking more than ten minutes about any one subject, animate or inanimate, and I really cannot promise to stand any more cross-examinations. Evelyn Rivers' mother is worse than dead to her—and to the world. She was a celebrated beauty in her day, had no end of lovers, and of course chose the worst, and when forced to marry Mr. Rivers, then a rising diplomatist, I suppose she secured to herself the privilege of running away on the first good opportunity. *Voilà tout*; and so good day. I can't trust myself with you any longer."

And the fashionable old bachelor moved off to join another of his numerous acquaintances, leaving Frank to muse over at his leisure the beauty of the fair Evelyn, and the information thus given of her history and her relatives.

Frank Temple did think long of that beautiful expressive face, and the sad story of her early childhood with an interest that was rare in the rising barrister. Little had he ever reckoned of woman's charms, or love, or marriage. He was bent on making for himself a name and a fortune by his undoubted talents; and to do this, he must either not marry at all, or marry where interest and wealth were the chief attractions of the bride—a consummation far from his tastes.

Thus he had reached the age of thirty-five, or perhaps even a year or two more, wholly devoted to his profession, and but rarely mingling in the gay world, to which his birth and rising reputation might have been a ready passport.

And from this it perhaps arose that he had displayed such lamentable ignorance as to the person and the history of the beautiful *débutante*. To this it might also be attributed that he returned that night to his chambers after his solitary club dinner, and found that the face of the young Evelyn mingled in the thoughts which ought to be devoted to the abstruse points in a brief that he was to argue on the morrow.

Lawyers like fathers have flinty hearts, but, like fathers, they are also susceptible of strange weaknesses at times.

But, as Clarence Fernly had parted with the young man, after the conversation that afterwards proved so memorable, neither he nor Frank Temple had noticed that a stranger had both listened to and displayed a singular interest in the brief dialogue.

Yet it was the figure of one who would scarcely have been suspected either of eavesdropping or of idle curiosity.

It was a man who could scarcely have passed middle-age; more than fifty winters had certainly not gone over his head; and yet his hair was white, dazzlingly white as the fallen snow; and his brow was deeply lined with marks that care, not time, had printed there.

His features were finely marked, and had once been decidedly handsome; and his figure had a dignified carriage and air, even now, when the vigour and the elasticity of youth had passed.

No one could doubt that he had once been, if he were not now, the equal of that gay and aristocratic throng by whom he was surrounded; but he exchanged no greetings with anyone; and if a careless eye rested on the glossy white beard and moustache, and the glittering eyes, it soon turned away from the unknown stranger, who "knew no one, and therefore must be nobody."

But yet he had listened eagerly, painfully, to each word that had fallen from the well-informed Clarence; and when the conversation had ceased he walked slowly down the side of the "Ride," his eyes anxiously searching for the faces of those whom Fernly had so freely discussed.

But they appeared to have disappeared at the other turn in the "Row," and the white-haired admirer of Evelyn was fain to give up his desire to catch another glimpse of her features, as hopelessly as her younger champion of the Temple.

Meanwhile, the three thus freely commented on had wended their way along the crowd in the "Ride," exchanging careless bows, and smiles, and brief greetings with those they knew, and the usual criticisms on any stranger forms and faces by whom they were surrounded, whether on horseback, in carriages, or on the promenade.

Oliver was gravely smiling at his fair cousin's

talk, and it might be, watching the looks of admiration that she excited. And Arthur, while evidently ready for the flirting "passage at arms" that any lively girl or youthful matron might offer for his amusement, was still equally watchful in his own fashion of Evelyn's demeanour.

At last the attention of all three was attracted by a very young and fair-haired girl, scarcely past the age of childhood, who was just leaving the park with a man that might be presumed to be her father, though little likeness existed between them.

There was something unpleasing and furtive in his handsome, dark, subtle face, that inspired at once dislike and distrust, while the young girl's face was fair and innocent in its child-like expression, albeit somewhat wanting in the intellect and firmness that alone constitutes true beauty.

Evelyn was about to exclaim: "What a pretty blonde!" when turning to Oliver for the utterance of this exclamation, to her astonishment, he was urging his horse to a brisk canter, that would soon place him out of the reach of her voice and recognition.

"What is it?" she asked, turning to Arthur in her perplexity, for Oliver was about the last man to give way to such sudden freaks of impulse.

"Can't say. I suppose he either knows something of that little girl, or wishes to do so. Oliver is no more immaculate than other folks, with all his grave airs."

But Evelyn was unconvinced.

"I don't believe it is that," she said. "Something has taken him away of far more consequence. Let us wait for him, Arthur."

"Impossible Eva. It is now past seven, and we are to dine punctually at eight, in order to get to the opera for the first act, and even you cannot make an opera toilette in less than half-an-hour. Oliver is no child, he can find his way home without us when he chooses."

"But—" she began, when Oliver appeared, at the same speed at which he had left them, and with a face unusually flushed and excited.

"Don't wait," he said hurriedly, "I'll be home to dinner, if I can, but if not, I'll join you at the opera. I've just seen a friend, but I'll be home as soon as I can. *Au revoir*."

And he galloped off at full speed.

Evelyn looked after him anxiously.

A strange trouble had settled on her features.

"Arthur, what is it? What has seized Oliver?"

"Really, Evelyn, I cannot tell," said the young man, rather sharply. "I am not my cousin's keeper, nor do I think it at all becoming to pry into my cousin's movements."

Evelyn was silent for a moment.

But the wound in her heart grew deeper and deeper, and she determined to risk even the imputation implied in Arthur's words.

"I wish you would follow him, Arthur," she said. "I could go home quite well with Vermont. It is such a little way. I hardly know why, but I feel terribly nervous. I have fancied all day that something is going to happen."

"Evelyn, you superstitious!—or is it only a nervous fancy, from over anxiety, perhaps, on Oliver's account?"

But there was a slight bitterness in the tone. Evelyn did not notice, nor even resent the taunt. Her mind was too pre-occupied for such trifling matters to affect her, and she was far more engrossed with her recent fears than with the ill-humour or the astonishment of her cousin.

"Perhaps it is superstitions; I cannot account for the folly myself," she said, a slight shiver coming over her as she spoke; "but I confess I am too oppressed with the presentiment that has weighed on me all day to be able to shake it off. But there have been many things lately to occasion it. Will you not go, Arthur?"

He did not smile, nor look scornful this time. The girl was too real in her overpowering alarm for him to risk any such tampering with it; it was very unlikely Evelyn to give way to foolish or weak terrors.

He gently laid his hand on the small fingers that held the bridle for a moment, and, looking straight into her agitated face, he said, gently and gravely:

"Evelyn, dear, your own good sense will tell you that Oliver would resent sternly any impudent prying into his movements from me at any rate. Of course he might bear it, when you were concerned, but a man will not tolerate such interference, least of all from a poor relation. There can be little chance of any danger in London, at nine o'clock on a May evening, to excuse such folly. And I am sure you must be overdone by the unusual gaiety lately, or you would never dream of such an absurdity."

Evelyn saw the justice of the reasoning, but her fears did not obey her judgment.

"Still Oliver has so few friends except those we know, Arthur. And—ad—to speak plainly—and

to let you see that I am not quite such an idiot as you fancy. I will tell you what it is that I fear. I—I—sometimes think that Cecil has not been like himself lately, and that Oliver knows more than he will tell me about him. Is it not so, dear Arthur? Please speak the truth."

The young man had moved his bridle impatiently while the girl was speaking, as if annoyed at the persistence in a subject that he had no wish to meet.

"Nonsense, Evelyn. It is foolish for you, a young girl, to trouble yourself about men's affairs. Cecil is perhaps a little more wild than Oliver or me, but then he has been placed differently. I have a sort of excitement which always exists in the military colleges before a fellow really passes. Very unlike Oliver's arithmetical cares and calculations, or Cecil's mill-horse routine at the Foreign Office. No, it is foolish to trouble yourself about what is never meant for a woman's knowledge."

And Arthur urged on his horse faster than etiquette permitted, as Evelyn did not give the signal. But the girl was not to be dismuted so easily.

"Arthur, you know better. You cannot suppose that I wish to know any one detail that is not suitable for me to hear. But I love Cecil too dearly not to be writhed at the idea that he is going wrong; and I have not seen him now for more than a week, and when I asked Oliver about him a flush came over his face, and he evaded my questions; but he could not deceive me. And, besides, I have fancied Oliver very strange and unlike himself of late, as if he was oppressed by some great and secret trouble. Oh, Arthur, don't be vexed, and don't laugh at me, for I cannot conquer the impression."

Arthur looked grave enough now, for the pale face was too irrefutable a proof of the reality of her fears for him to venture on reproof or railing.

"Evelyn, dear cousin, all this may be true, and yet you completely mistake me as to the cause. Oliver has many weighty affairs on his mind, and he is not a man to share anxiety with anyone—even with me—unless it could do some good; but what you have observed may be totally unconnected with Cecil. However, I promise you, that if you will be a good girl, and go quickly home to dress, and banish all these fancies, I will try and get at the truth tomorrow, and let you know as much as I can of these mysterious nothings that torment you so terribly. Come, we shall not be ready, unless Lizzie is lightning-like in her operations. It is quarter to eight, I hear it chiming."

Arthur was guilty of a little harmless deception, for the hour was pealing half-past seven as they arrived in Belgrave Square, and lifting Evelyn from her horse, the two passed rapidly through the hall and up the staircase to their several rooms.

"You will not be long, Evelyn. I will let you know if anything happens during your seclusion," said Arthur, playfully, as his cousin went into the boudoir that joined her bed-room. "I daresay Oliver will be here before you are perfectly costumed."

And he passed to his own apartment; Evelyn closed her door, but she did not ring for her maid.

The fear on her heart was too oppressive—its darkness was deeper and deeper.

She tried to calm herself—to reason—to struggle against the vague apprehension that weighed on her mind; but in vain.

Then she tried to breathe a prayer.

Yet for what should she pray?

There was nothing real,—nothing tangible against which she could implore aid and comfort.

Then the child-like dependence that is natural to woman's heart, grew stronger and stronger in its impulses.

She threw herself on her knees, and burying her face in the cushions of her sofa, she breathed out the broken ejaculations that find more favour with Him who knows the heart, than the most elaborate and formal prayers.

Evelyn was comforted by the very outpouring of her feelings, the very petition for comfort seemed to come back in her own heart, and she rose from her knees with a strengthened and animated spirit.

She felt a kind of impression that she should be heard about what she feared. She wiped the tears from her eyes, and rang the bell for the Lizzie alluded to by Arthur, albeit the idea of dressing for the gay scene to which they were bound, was far from congenial to her feelings.

And the envy of many young and thoughtless girls, as they thought of the fair creature, who could go home after a ride in the brilliant Rotten Row, only to be dressed in the most elegant toilette for a renewed pleasure at the yet more fascinating opera, would have been silenced, could they have looked in the heavy heart, or even in the pale, dejected face of the beautiful Miss Rivers at that moment.

Lizzie now appeared.

A pretty, bright-looking girl, with less pretension and affection than most of her class; but with quite enough skill to set off the charms of her lovely mistress.

"Lizzie, is Mr. Oliver returned?"

"I think not, Miss Evelyn, but I cannot say for certain; only his bell had not rung when I came upstairs, and Peter was waiting for it quite impatient. A very nice man is Peter, Miss Evelyn, and looks after his master as if he was a brother."

Evelyn smiled in spite of herself. Lizzie betrayed so innocently the interest that the faithful Peter had evidently excited in her unsophisticated heart.

The toilette went on.

Evelyn was always particularly simple in her tastes, so far as that simplicity was consistent with elegance, and the notions of her wealthy uncle. But on the evening in question, it was her humour to be especially so.

She chose only the simplest evening dress in her wardrobe—a white *crêpe*—with no ornaments save an exquisite set of coral, that had been her mother's in former days; and which she frequently wore when she had a repugnance to any more elaborate or gay ornaments. They were somewhat peculiar in their arrangement, and set in the most light and exquisite gold filigree work, which appeared foreign in its extreme lightness and delicate workmanship.

Evelyn had always prized that set far above the more costly jewels that her uncle had lavished on her in his days of health.

But it certainly became well the girlish form, and creamy complexion of the wearer.

The toilette completed, Evelyn dismissed Lizzie to ascertain whether her cousin had returned, and remained pacing her pretty boudoir, without the least idea of the time, albeit she stopped at intervals before the gold clock on her mantel-piece, to examine the hands, and then passed away without the least idea what they indicated.

More than once she paused before the window, but only to perceive that the growing darkness of the hour was deepened by rain-clouds, which began to fall in large drops, and to indicate the approach of a storm, after the unusual heat of the day.

Surely Oliver must have returned.

The weather would drive him home, if nothing else could do so. He could not remain exposed to such a storm without even the protection of an umbrella.

At last Lizzie returned.

"I believe there is a message from Mr. Oliver, Miss Evelyn, for I see that Peter has gone up to Mr. Arthur with a note. I daresay he's in the drawing-room by this time, miss."

And as the supposition was a very rational one, the young lady took her handkerchief and gloves from the maid, and bounded down stairs, without even a glance at herself in the large looking-glass.

She entered the drawing-room, and was surprised and delighted to find that one of her most cherished acquaintances—a young lady just lately married—had looked in on the way to a *conversazione*.

Their first salutations were scarcely over, and the young ladies seated for a few minutes' gossip, when they were interrupted by the entrance of Arthur with a note from Oliver Danvers, which Evelyn perused after her friend had departed. It ran thus:

"DEAR ARTHUR,—Can't get home to dinner, I find, so don't wait a moment. I shall certainly join you at the opera, as I said, unless something very urgent prevents. Tell Evelyn not to be angry; it is important business that demands me. Don't be uneasy if I should not turn up. I am too uncertain for that, and too determined to finish all before I leave.—Yours,

OLIVER."

Evelyn read the note over twice—thrice, and then returned it to Arthur.

And even the bloom that the coral cast upon her creamy cheek could not hide the extreme paleness that came over her lovely face.

"Why, Eva, you little perverse trembler; what can trouble you so?"

"Arthur!"

"Evelyn."

"Can you wonder at my being uneasy? Do you not see that Oliver is in some strange and dreadful affair, that may have danger in it, and which we have no means of tracing. If he should not come home, where could we search for him—what could we do?"

"Evelyn, do have a little common sense. As if a man of past thirty could not go about the most civilised city in all Europe, for a dozen hours, without being watched. Silly girl! I am really astonished at you, Evelyn. If you were an old maid of seventy, instead of seventeen, I could forgive you."

"Arthur, will you tell me, what could be done if Oliver does not return? Where did that note come from?"

"His club; so he was at large when he wrote it."

And the young man tried to laugh, but Evelyn saw that he was not free from uneasiness.

"Will you send and see whether Cecil is at his rooms," was Evelyn's next query.

"Certainly, if you will do it in a rational way. Send a ticket for the opera, and ask whether he will join us?"

The girl drew the ormolu inkstand to her, and wrote a few hurried lines, but the gold penholder shook, and her fingers certainly did not trace their usually graceful characters.

Then she enclosed the ticket, and Arthur rang the bell.

"Take this to Brook Street, directly—wait for an answer, and order dinner at once."

The orders were rapidly given, and in about ten minutes the "Dinner is served" sounded as pompously from the dignified butler's lips, as if there was a room full of the fashionable guests who used to throng the wealthy Mark Danver's board.

Arthur led his fair cousin down to their meal, in a hopeless attempt to make believe that all was as usual.

They were virtually if not wholly alone, for the sole person besides at the dinning-table was the *ci-devant* governess of Miss Rivers, but who remained rather to play the part of a duenna, than for any other purpose.

In truth, Mrs. Forbes was one of the starched automatons who are most accomplished governesses, but have no ideas that any but stereotyped and proper arrangements can belong to any young lady's thoughts and life. She might have been a Spanish duenna for all that she knew or cared of Evelyn's recent thoughts and feelings, albeit she had been her instructor for the last seven years.

It was remarkable how Mrs. Forbes could preserve her equanimity in the midst of the most exciting or the most agitating scenes; and how her toilette, her employments, and even her appetite went on in the same unvarying routine.

This albeit, Evelyn sent away plate after plate nearly untasted, and Arthur certainly drank more and eat less than was his wont, Mrs. Forbes went through the ceremony of dinner at the same formal rate, eating her usual quantity, and drinking her given three glasses of sherry at precisely the same pace, and with the same deliberation as if no variation from the cheerful party had occurred.

At last the ceremony was over.

"Shall I order the carriage, Evelyn?"

She looked deprecatingly.

"Is the message come from Brook Street?"

Arthur went himself to inquire.

He returned in a few minutes.

"Cecil is not at home. He has not been there for two or three days, but is expected every hour. No doubt he has taken some trip in the country. Evelyn; come—we are doing no good here. If Oliver does not join us in an hour or two, we can but return home. He wishes us to be there, Evelyn. There may be some especial reason for it."

She felt that it was best.

And if Oliver expected to join them there, it would avoid delay in meeting him.

The last touch was put to the toilette.

Mrs. Forbes donned her usual large opera cloak, in which she appeared nightly, on every occasion when it could envelop her tall figure, and followed her young charge into the carriage, when Arthur jumped in, after a hasty order; and in a brief space they were at the gay opera house in the Haymarket.

It is strange to observe what is the effect of such a place and gaiety in such a mood as Evelyn's. It either banishes, or rather crushes down for the time, the weight on the heart, or else it gives a sort of phantasmagorical effect to the whole scene, and occasions a kind of wonderment how others can seem so light, careless and gay, when the sufferer's poor heart is so tortured and the brain so anxious; but in Evelyn's case it was, perhaps, a mingling of the two.

The excitement of the dazzling variety of the scene did, perhaps, contribute to make the apprehensions she had entertained appear more vague and unreasonable. But yet, the inward certainty that some mystery was at work, and that Oliver would not have acted so strangely without good cause, weighed on every attempt to rally her usual buoyancy.

So she kept glancing keenly, in every interval of the music, to see whether Oliver was there; and each turn of the handle of a neighbouring box, or the entry of a fresh figure in the pit or stalls set her heart beating—only to be disappointed.

The evening went on, and the opera was concluded—and still no Oliver.

But strangely enough, in the stalls nearly opposite to Evelyn's box, was a figure, very different to the young and middle-aged aristocrats by which he was surrounded.

It was the white-haired stranger of the park.

Grisi surpassed herself on that evening, Mario was bewitching in his fascinating rôle of lover, and the contraltos and the baritones were worthy of their celebrated *chef*; but Evelyn's eyes were wandering incessantly towards the door of the box, and the stranger's attention was riveted on that fair girl and her graceful *parure*.

He might have been a lover—from the wrapt and abstracted gaze he bent on the beautiful Evelyn's person, he might have been a connoisseur in jewellery, from the earnest look he bent on the rare and unique set of coral gems, and yet he was too old for the one character, and far too aristocratic and high-bred looking for the other.

Had it been worth while to waste thought and speculation on an aged stranger, the *habitués* of the stalls and the pit might have wondered who the white-haired man could be, and what were the attractions that drew his gaze to the opposite box, but as it was, few observed him, and fewer still bestowed a second thought on him and his peculiarities.

(To be continued.)

THE Prince of Wales now receives from the Duchy of Cornwall £3,000. a year.

Garibaldi, it is expected, will visit England this year.

MR. MEEK, of York, has received an official notification of Her Majesty's intention to confer upon him the honour of knighthood.

ADMIRAL SIR HENRY PRESCOTT, K.C.B., one of the few men who were present at the battle of Trafalgar, was the other day knocked down by a cab while crossing the road near Charing-cross. We are happy to state that the gallant Admiral, has not sustained any serious injury.

A SWORDFISH was caught a few days back by some Eastbourne fisherman in Seaford Bay. The monster was a very fine specimen of this formidable fish, measuring in extreme length 8ft. 6in., and in girth nearly 4ft. The sword was 26in. long, and the width of the tail was 33in.

LAST year, it is reported, a Polish gentleman captured a swan upon his estates; he had a tin collar with suitable inscription put round the neck of the bird, which was then given its liberty. This year the bird returned with a superb collar in gold, upon which was engraved the following words—"India cum donis remittit ciconiam colonis," which proves that the swan wintered in India with a nabob and scholar.

Some time since we noticed the arrival of a large quantity of tortoises in Liverpool, consigned to Mr. Cross. In consequence of the great demand for these animals, orders were sent out for other large consignments; and the first of two vessels has arrived in the Mersey with the greater portion of her cargo consisting of tortoises. It is a strange fact that by far the greater portion of these animals are purchased by the fair sex, with whom they appear to be great pets.

WHERE cheap railway travelling will end no son of a prophet can tell, but by a recent act of Parliament placards are exhibited at every railway station, specifying the charges from the particular station to every other direct station with which it communicates. At the Abbey Hill Station, on the North British Railway, a halfpenny is published as the fare to Leith Walk. Would it not be better for all parties to average by aggregating short distance stations at the uniform postage rate of a penny over all?

GENERAL WRANGEL, who has been for some time in Wildbad, has had great amusement at the rumour of his death which the German newspapers sometime ago spread over the country. The general is quite a character, and treats the ladies in Wildbad with the same old-fashioned court gallantry which he practices in Berlin, where he bows to every apparently respectable lady whom he meets in the street. Some years ago the Austrian General Hess was visiting Berlin, and brought with him his young and beautiful wife whom he had just married. Old General Wrangel met them at the *soirée*, and soon entered into conversation with the lady, whom he highly amused by his dry humour. Wrangel remarked that General Hess was looking over at them, and imagined that his Austrian colleague was somewhat jealous. He went up to him, took him by the hand, conducted him to Frau von Wrangel, an excellent and cultivated, but very old lady, and bowing, said to the general: "General, revenge yourself!"

MEMORIAL PEAL OF BELLS FOR AUSTRALIA.—A peal of eight bells to commemorate the visit of His Royal Highness, the Duke of Edinburgh to Ballarat, Australia, in the key of E flat, the tenor weighing 28 cwt., has just been cast by Messrs. Mears and

Stainbank, of Whitechapel, agreeably with an order received from the "Alfred Memorial Bells Fund Committee," to be placed in a new tower at Ballarat, "to perpetuate the joy of its inhabitants at the failure of the murderous attempt on the life of His Royal Highness the Duke of Edinburgh, while on his memorable visit to these shores." The tenor bell bears the following inscription: "In majorem Dei Optimi Maximi gloriam. Qui Principem Honorablem Alfreduum Edinburgae Duceum, Reginae Nostrae Victoriae filium, sicari manu graviter vulneratum ex morte eripuit, Cives Ballaratenses gratissima tantum rem memoria prosecuti has campanam fundi jusserunt. Anno Salutis Nostrae 1868." Mr. Thomas Walesby, of Golden-square, says most of the principal inhabitants of Ballarat have subscribed to the fund for defraying the expense of this well-timed and praiseworthy undertaking.

SCIENCE.

WATERPROOF PAPER.—A patent has been obtained in America for the manufacture of waterproof paper. It will be no uncommon thing, by-and-by, to carry a quart of milk home in a paper bag!

A NEW process for preserving wood by means of borax is announced. The wood, it is said, can be made impermeable to water by dissolving some shalac in the solution of borax.

TROUT in the Wye are becoming scarcer every year, owing to the great increase of pike. A very short time since Mr. W. Stephens, of Hereford, who has a fishery, caught 200 pike; and in the mouth of one he found seventy-seven fry an inch long.

THE use of wood in the manufacture of paper has greatly increased in Germany in the last few years. A new mill of the kind has lately been erected at Petersdorff, in Silesia, a province where a great deal of this sort of paper is made.

A "VERY" OLD INVENTION.—A road of rails was laid down and used in the old temple of Eleusis. A certain heathen priest, name unknown, was there more than two thousand years in advance of the modern inventors of railroads.

HEAT BY COMPRESSION.—Everyone knows that, if a certain volume of air be compressed, the temperature is raised in certain proportions. Acting on this fact, Mr. Bessemer has devised a plan for increasing immensely the heat of furnaces by condensing the gases.

INVERTED SYPHON.—An iron pipe 11 in in diameter, and 8,000 ft. (a mile and two-thirds) long, has been laid in Tuolumne county, California. It runs down a mountain, under a creek, and up the ascent on the opposite side, under a perpendicular pressure at the lowest point of 684 ft.

VERY extensive preparations are being made by the Dock Company at Hull, and by the corporation to insure for their Royal Highnesses the Prince and Princess of Wales a right royal welcome on the occasion of their visit to name and open the new dock at Hull.

We understand the borings for rock salt near Wyden, Switzerland, have given very favourable results. Near the Rhine a bed of 80ft. in thickness has been found at a depth of 420ft. below the surface, and another 50ft. thick not far off. The salt is hard, pure, and of excellent quality.

MUSCULAR POWER OF INSECTS.—A man of thirty, weighing on an average a hundred and thirty pounds, can drag, according to Regnier, only a hundred and twenty pounds. The proportion of the weight drawn to the weight of his body is no more than as twelve to thirteen. A draught horse can exert, only for a few instants, an effort equal to about two-thirds of his own proper weight. The man, therefore, is stronger than the horse. But, according to Plateau, the smaller insect drags without difficulty five, six, ten, twenty times its own weight. The cockchafer draws fourteen times its own weight, and more. Other coleoptera are able to put themselves into equilibrium with a force of traction, reaching as high as forty-two times their own weight. Insects, therefore, when compared with the vertebrates, which we employ as beasts of draught, have enormous muscular power. If a horse had the same relative strength as a donkey, the traction it could exercise would be equivalent to some sixty thousand pounds. M. Plateau has also adduced evidence of the fact that in the same group of insects, if you compare two insects, notably differing in weight, the smaller and lighter will manifest the greater strength. To ascertain its pushing power, M. Plateau introduced the insect into a card-paper tube whose inner surface was slightly roughened. The creature perceiving the light at the end through a transparent plate which barred its passage,

advanced by pushing the latter forward with all its might and main, especially if excited a little. The plate pushed forward acted on a lever connected with an apparatus for measuring the effort made. In this case also it turned out that the comparative power of pushing, like that of traction, is greatest in proportion as the size and weight of the insect are small. Experiments to determine the weight which a flying insect can carry were performed by means of a thread with a ball of putty at the end, whose mass could be augmented or reduced at will. The result is that, during flight, an insect cannot carry a weight sensibly greater than that of its own body. Consequently, man, less heavy than the horse, has a greater relative muscular power. The dog, less heavy than man, drags a comparatively heavier burden. Insects, as their weight grows less and less, are able to drag more and more. It would appear, therefore, that the muscular force of living creatures is in inverse proportion to their mass.

NEW LIFE PRESERVING JACKET.—An interesting exhibition and trial was recently made in the Wear at Sunderland, with Damatt's "I'm afloat life preserving jacket." The trial was very satisfactory. There can be no doubt that this jacket will be an invaluable boon to the seafaring community. In case of danger it can be readily donned, and will enable anyone to sustain himself above water no matter how tempestuous the sea may be.

The Portland *Argus* says a new paper boat of the Waters' patent, has just been brought there. The boat is 81 ft. long, 12 in. wide, and weighs about 22lb. The lightest wooden boat of similar dimensions would weigh 41lb. The paper boat is believed to be more than four times stronger than one of wood. All of it save where the sculler sits is gas-tight, so that in the event of a race sufficient gas may be taken into it to reduce its weight to 8lb.

ACCORDING to Böttger, the metal antimony may laid graphite in galvanic batteries. He finds the following arrangement preferable, as regards force and durability, to either Daniell's, Minotto's, or Leblanche's batteries:—A cylinder of amalgamated zinc is placed in a concentrated solution of equal parts of common salt and sulphate of magnesia; the antimony is placed in a porous cell filled with dilute sulphuric acid.

WELL-SINKING IN ALGERIA.—A curious circumstance is announced from Algeria. A well, lately sunk at Ain Sala to the depth of forty-four metres, threw up not only a large body of water, but, to the surprise of the engineers, an innumerable quantity of small fish. These are described as being on an average half-an-inch long, and resembling whitebait both in appearance and taste. From the fact of the sand extracted from these wells being identical with that which forms the bed of the Nile, it is concluded that an underground communication must exist between them and that river.

MARVELLOUS DISCOVERY.—The prizes that were offered by Mr. Barkas to pit lads, to induce them to search for fossil remains, have been attended with the most unexpected results. Not only have the lads picked up from the refuse shale heaps large numbers of fish remains, and some remains of large reptiles, but what is really extraordinary, and will astonish palaeontologists, one of the lads has found the lower jaw of a true mammal. The effect of this discovery will be to reduce the comparative ages of all hitherto known mammalia, and carry backwards the mammalian life of the world for millions of years.

CHANGES WROUGHT DURING RESPIRATION.—The immense volume of air which we inspire is on purpose to give life to the liquid essence of our food—life to the dead blood. Until acted upon by the atmosphere, the fluid which is traversing the lungs is to all intents and purposes, dead; and, consequently, totally incapable of repairing worn structures, of carrying-on functions, or of maintaining any vitality in the system—nay, it even contains in its elements considerable quantity of pernicious poison, brought to the lungs to be given out in the act of breathing, lest it should kill the human fabric. The poison alluded to is carbonic acid. To breathe in an atmosphere of carbonic acid is death, as rapid as it is certain. The pure air inspired by the lungs contains seventy-nine parts of nitrogen to twenty-one of oxygen; but the air expired is found, on being analysed, to have lost about five out of the twenty-one parts of oxygen, or about a fourth of its oxygen—its place being supplied by an equal volume of carbonic acid. The other constituent, nitrogen, is scarcely altered. It should, then, be noted that with every effort of the lungs, a large proportion of the oxygen inhaled is taken up by the system. It is this element of the atmosphere which kindles the fire of being. It is this which is momentarily busy within the breasts of us all, working out the great human miracle. The instant the dark, rank, poisonous fluid which is circulating in the lungs receives within itself this vital

air, swift as a flash it leaps instinct with life, as if touched by the spirit of the great Creator. Such is Nature's law. So wonderful are all the laws ordained to govern being. And well were it for man's happiness could he but be made to feel that when he breaks a law of Nature, he breaks a law of God.

BLASTING ROCKS UNDER THE SEA.—The granite rocks which have so long impeded the navigation of the arm of the sea between New York and Long Island, are now being blasted. Apparatus is erected for working a drill under water by steam. The drill bar at its cutting end is 1½ in. in diameter, and has nineteen diamonds imbedded in its face. When in motion it makes from 300 to 500 rotations a minute, and in that time, such is the cutting power of the diamonds, that the hole is sunk 1½ in. A number of holes, consequently, can be drilled in a day. A diver then descends and charges them with nitro-glycerine which is exploded in the usual way.

IMPROVED CABS.—The Council of the Society of Arts have offered the following medals for improved hackney carriages specially suited to the metropolis:—The Society's Gold Medal for the best and most convenient open hackney carriage for two persons; the Society's Silver Medal for the second best ditto; the Society's Gold Medal for the best and most convenient closed hackney carriage for two persons; the Society's Silver Medal for the second best ditto; the Society's Gold Medal for the best and most convenient closed hackney carriage for four persons; the Society's Silver Medal for the second best ditto. Lightness of construction, combined with adequate strength and durability, will be especially considered in making the awards.

MESSRS. SPIERS AND POND'S Restaurant at the Wimbledon Camp covers a space of 1½ acres, and contains over 2,000 ft. super of framed and glazed work in the facade, over 400 squares of flooring, besides roofing and all the internal fittings; a bar 200ft. long, offices, stores, cellars, kitchen, cooking apparatus, and all internal fittings. The whole building is put together in sections of 5ft., and with bolts and nuts, making the whole portable. This building, together with the whole of the temporary erections in troop stables, forage and commissariat stores, entrance buildings, post and police offices, canteens, and about four miles of fencing 6ft. high, were carried out by Messrs. W. Bracher and son in three weeks and two days.

DISCOVERY OF NATURAL GAS.—Some workmen, while boring for water at Middleton Hall, Uphall, the other day, observed that gas escaped from the bore. They applied a light, and instantly the gas blazed up into a beautiful white flame, and continued to burn with increased force for some time, when it was extinguished by the workmen in order to resume boring. After the men had finished their "shift," the gas had considerably increased in volume. It was again ignited, and a pale of cold water suspended over it, which was boiled in thirty minutes. The strata from which the gas evolves are well known to mineralogists as the marl which overlies the rich bituminous shales of this district. Judging from the extent of the source of supply and the richness of the gas, it might be profitably employed for oil-making, heating, and illuminating purposes.

UTILISING WASTE STEAM FROM CYLINDERS.—The invention of Mr. Robert Meldrum of Pittomrie, Scotland, for the utilisation of the waste steam which has done its work in the cylinder without condensing it with cold water, consists of a chamber or chambers (which latter are connected with each other by proper openings), in which fans are mounted, and from which, as well as the boiler cylinder and parts in connection therewith, common air has been extracted, either through displacement or by an air-pump. The steam when allowed to bear on these fans, owing to their position, will drive them round at a very great speed, but in accordance with the power of the steam, and their being a sufficiency of the above, the steam will in its progress lose its power until it has none; or, in other words, be received into a vacuum. These chambers by their proper ducts will receive the condensed steam, from which, or other suitable place, it may be pumped back into the boiler, thus forming a continuous revolution of the motive power. The fans hereinbefore described should be made to fit closely at the top and sides of the chambers. The openings communicating between one chamber and another he prefers to make as one large orifice at the top for the steam, and a smaller one at the bottom, for any water formed to pass through, and in the first chamber this bottom orifice should be very small, in order that as little steam as possible may pass through it. In succeeding chambers the holes may increase in size according to the size requisite for removing the water formed. There may be sets of chambers ranged in order side by side, or otherwise, which may be connected by tubing, according to requirement for condensation.



[WILL SHE LIVE?]

FAIRLEIGH; OR, THE BANKER'S SECRET.

CHAPTER LXIII.

How much good those words did Clarence's aching heart! How like balm upon his wounded spirit fell that gentle voice, so full of kindness. With a brightened look, he said :

"I came here, Milly, hoping to raise my spirits by the sight of your cheerful face. My hopes have been realised; your love is a blessing, dearest, which I hope I appreciate."

She smiled; she knew his words were not flattery, but came from the heart. In a moment she rejoined :

"Ah, Clarence, if I could only do as much for you as you have done for me."

"Milly, you do more; your love is worth more than anything else to me; it comforts me in my sadness, and makes my happy moments doubly joyous."

"Oh, Clarence, if one look, word, or action of mine can have such an effect upon you, I am indeed happy. How strange it seems, to think that you could ever care for me," she responded, in her artless, unaffected way.

"Why strange, darling? Goodness is not confined exclusively to the rich, and the domestic realm is not rendered more happy by the dull and tantalising method which circumstances take to teach life less song."

"I think you are right; yet it is not at all pleasant to be poor."

"Not at all; but very inconvenient, and very often the foundation of misery and crime. Still, those who pass through it seem to shine with a brighter lustre when surrounded by different circumstances. To use an old expression—'Tis the rubbing that brightens the shilling."

Milly did not reply at once.

Clarence's theory was very good; but if he should ever have to pass through a siege of poverty his opinions might undergo a radical change, and he might possibly be willing to forego the pleasure of that kind of rubbing, and sacrifice the extra lustre, to be wasted at some future day, for the more substantial and needy, dull shilling of the present.

After an hour more, spent in a very happy manner, he reluctantly arose to depart.

"Clary," she said, winding her arms about his neck, "you will not grieve any more than you can possibly help."

"Darling, for your sake I will try and do as you

request. I am happy to know that you have a comfortable home; indeed your looks testify to your contentment."

And he glanced with pleasure and admiration at the cheeks which were now full and tinted with a slight touch of nature's charming red.

Her form, too, was straight, undulating, well developed, and graceful. What a change a few short months of mental rest and a supply of physical requirements had produced; 'twas marvellous.

He held her hand a moment, pressed a kiss upon her lips and was gone.

Entering his carriage, he rested upon the cushions, with hope once more raised in his heart. The effect of the soothing, gentle influence of love which was exercised over him by his cherished Milly, served in a measure to ameliorate the bitterness of his sorrow. When he arrived home, he found Florence alone in the sitting-room. She looked up, and smiled with the hope that it would tend to brighten his mind a little.

"Ah, dear Floss," he said, advancing, and taking her hand, "I know the meaning of that smile. You seek to cheer me. How kind you are! You bear your grief with more fortitude than I do."

"If it were not for Charles, brother, my feelings would control me, but his firm gentleness and assuring hope keeps me from despair."

"He is a noble fellow," mused Clarence. "My distrust of him has caused me great pain. I can hardly forgive myself. But how did he escape with his life?"

"He has not told me yet. He says: 'Wait until we are happier, then you shall know all.'"

"But he did corroborate your dream, as far as the water was concerned?"

"Yes, and that is all. He is safe—alive! I care not how, as long as it is so. But, Clarence, you look more cheerful."

"Yes, my sister; I, too, have been struggling with my feelings, battling with the anguish that oppresses us all. And I have someone to accompany me, yes—two."

"To whom do you refer, with such a significant look?"

"To you, dear Floss, for one," he said, kissing the pale cheek; "for your matchless patience and hope have contributed greatly towards abating the poignancy of my grief."

"I am glad if my poor example has benefitted you any, but we must all hope. Oh, what a terrible, dreary, dark, aimless place this world would be without hope. But you spoke of another whose influence exerted a felicitous effect upon you?"

"Yes, sister mine, and you doubtless will be surprised when I tell you. In the first place, if ever this portentous cloud is dispelled, I am to be married."

"Married! Oh, Clarence!"

The tone was full of sad surprise. At another time she would have welcomed the intelligence with pleasure, now it seemed only mockery.

"Yes, are you not glad?"

"I can say nothing now. There is no pleasure in anything; life itself is merely a balancing between sadness and despair. But the lady?"

"Is one who loves me, knows my faults, and will make me happy, and who loves my sister as a sister?"

"I know not who it is; tell me."

"Milly Prescott."

"You have chosen wisely, Clarence. I think your opinions must have undergone a radical change since our first visit."

"They have. I—"

He was interrupted by the hurried entrance of the young doctor, whose features wore a troubled expression.

"Oh, Charles!" exclaimed Florence, "is mother worse—tell me?"

"Do not be agitated, darling. Here, Clarence, take this prescription and have it made up. I would have sent a servant, but knew that you would be more expeditious. Come, Floss, you had better go up, and try to soothe your mother."

With a dread fear, Clarence speedily left the house.

Charles and Florence went upstairs, where Mrs. Ormsby lay in wild delirium.

Florence pressed kiss after kiss upon the throbbing brow, murmuring :

"Oh, mamma—poor mamma, how you suffer. Oh, Charles, will she live?"

"Heaven knows, I hope so, Floss, but we cannot tell. I shall do all that man can do."

There stood Florence pale and trembling, watching by her mother's bedside, and listening with acute pain to the heart-piercing wails that arose from the troubled soul.

"Oh, heaven, what agony! My father in prison, and my mother in raging delirium, at the point of death." Thus the thoughts formed into words, and burst forth from her over-charged heart.

Truly it seemed that all hope was gone; that acute sorrow, death, and utter annihilation was their only portion.

Rowe maintained that forced calmness—an outward covering for the perturbed spirit within—that

had marked his course; his self-possession was wonderful. He gazed upon Florence, and felt that for her sake he must preserve his equanimity, for one sign of faltering from him, and her support was gone. With this thought uppermost in his mind, he strained every nerve to restore her mother, brought forth all his volition to sustain his own sinking spirit, and extended all his counsel and love to comfort poor weeping, though still heroic, Florence.

A day of awful terror was that to the inmates of the Ormsby mansion. With them only too keen and afflicting was the knowledge of the condition in which their mother lay—their dear, beloved mother, almost at the point of death; while alone, confined by iron and stone, the father languished, and naught knew of his angel wife's state, or his children's troubled grief.

Dark, dark—would the clouds ever rise? Gloom, gloom, will thy mantle e'er be raised? Sorrow, sorrow, can thy appetite s'or be quenched? Misery, misery, how long shall be thy reign? Grief, grief, shall thy sting be e'er withdrawn? Agony, agony, wilt thou endure for ever.

Yea, yea—the answer seemed to come, and hope seemed vanquished, while out from the overloaded hearts and tortured spirits, burst the words, "O, God, wilt thou have mercy?"

CHAPTER LXIV.

ONCE more, and for the last time, I must call the reader's attention to the subterranean cavern, its adjacent apartments and personages.

In the little, low, damp, foul house, (which the reader will remember was situated above the extreme end of the cavern, and directly above the "boiler," through which the cavern was accessible) leaning against the bar, stood a medium-height, litho man of fine form, which would give the impression that his feature were delicate, and in keeping with his general appearance. But no, his face was brown and rough, and nearly concealed by a heavy, coarse beard.

'Twas nearly dusk. The man appeared restless, and every few moments he gazed anxiously out of the door, and then turned away in a dissatisfied manner, while under the huge moustache the lips could be seen to move, as though he were biting them with vexation.

Anon he walked the floor, while he struck his gloved hands impatiently together. The bar tender looked at him rather inquiringly, but said nothing. He knew that the other was a member of the gang, and it was policy for him to hold his tongue.

After traversing the room for a short time the heavy-bearded man again walked towards the door, again gazed up and down the miserable alley, with the same expectant expression. For a moment he started, smiled grimly, and with a satisfied look walked back and resumed his position against the bar.

There were no other persons besides those two in the room. It was not yet time for the crowd of rough, and miserable degraded idlers to make their appearance, and squander the last shilling that they had begged or stolen during the day.

The heavy-bearded man turned. As he did so, four rough looking individuals stumbled into the apartment, and ranged themselves around the room, gazing upon its shabby, tawdry ornamentation with a vacant stare.

The bar tender was about to speak, when the "member" gave him a signal, and he remained quiet.

Presently two or three more came in, and were followed by others, until the number of new comers was increased to twelve.

The heavy-bearded man exchanged a signal with the first man of the four who had first entered, and then walked to the back of the room, followed by the whole twelve in single file. From thence they entered a smaller room, and securely locked the door by which they had entered.

None spoke. The "member" lifted a trap-door which occupied the centre of the floor, and seemed a part of the wood, so neatly was it fitted. Upon opening that a surface of iron appeared. Crossing the room, he placed his hand in one corner near the floor, and opened a small door which seemed a part of the wall; then he touched a spring, and the iron slid back, exposing to view a cavity, but so dark that nothing could be seen.

Replacing the door in the wall, he returned to the abyss, and, clutching the sides, let himself gently down; then lighting a match, the terrible chasm and its arrangements of death there contained were revealed.

Upon one side was a small jut of iron, the only place upon which to rest the foot in descending, and very hazardous at that. Below, darkness visible, while on all sides were jagged rocks.

The men beheld this fearful display in awe and silence. Then the "member" let go the ring with

one hand, and touched a spring above it; then swinging himself forward, he struck the iron door; it opened, and he landed in the cave.

Then he lighted a torch, and returning to the entrance, looked at the first man of the twelve, as much as to say:

"Can you descend?"

He seemed to understand the mute question, for he bowed his head and began his perilous descent, which he accomplished in safety.

In a short time the twelve had descended, although some shuddered as they gazed at the dark water and jagged rocks.

Presently the door of the iron stalls, which we have described in the opening chapters, were thrown open, and the conductor, lifting his finger, pointed to them.

The first of the twelve gave his men a signal, and the rough jackets were cast into the stalls, exposing to view belts around them containing heavy clubs and revolvers.

The leader of them threw off his wig, false whiskers, and rough jacket, and there in the retreat, with his trusty followers, with flushed cheek, and his eye brightly shining, in all the pride of his manhood and noble object, stood Detective Dayton!

For a moment the keen, gray eye wandered around the apartment, then turning to the conductor, he said:

"Are you *Vérité sans Peur?* I must know!"

The man replied with his fingers:

"I know nothing. I do as I am told."

"Whom do you get your instructions from?"

"Letters," he replied with his fingers.

"He knows nothing about it," thought Dayton. "I wonder if anyone knows."

Two men were now placed in each stall; the doors were closed, and Detective Dayton and his brave followers were locked in the cavern. In each of the doors was an aperture in the shape of a circle, and about two inches in diameter. These, however, were above their heads, and could only be reached by standing on tiptoe.

Their conductor had departed, and alone in that strange, weird, silent place, they saw the shadows deepen, and darkness at length settle around them. What emotions filled Dayton's breast as he stood in that cell waiting, waiting for the time of action to arrive! The darkness grew more dense, and the silence more ominous. His expectation was raised to fever pitch; he pressed his hands to his brow, and sought to calm himself, but all was in vain. He had an object in view, and it continually rose before his mind, increasing his impatience, until he could hardly stand still. And still no sound; and slowly the minutes dragged along. The suspense had been tantalising, it was approximating to torture; the beads of sweat stood upon his brow, and his heart beat with wild fury. Expectation, hope, apprehension, and revenge, were the feelings that surged within his breast, and caused his excited anticipation.

And still the same dull, dreary, monotonous waiting. His brow throbbed, his cheeks tingled from the hot blood that rushed through his veins, and his whole thought, feeling, mind, happiness, ah! life and salvation, were staked upon the issue of that night.

Ere long a grating sound struck upon his ear, and he knew that someone had entered. The hour drew near—the hour he had so long waited, hoped, prayed for; he trembled violently, and strained every nerve to catch the slightest sound, while his impatience increased with each succeeding moment.

Two men had entered the cave, and seated themselves at the long table.

"I 'pose," muttered one, "that we ain't 'lowed to strike a glim?"

"No; the chief 'll raise a row if you do. It's a 'bender' night, and we musn't do anything to get his mad up, cos if we don't we get more shiners."

A half-hour's silence followed, which, to the eloquent officers, seemed little less than a day. All were at the "qui vive" for operations to commence, while interest and expectation harassed their minds. Again the iron door was heard to open, and two more men entered. They had hardly seated themselves, ere six more were added, making the number ten.

It was nearly time for Luke to make his appearance. Until then the lamps could not be lighted; for Gibbons, who gloried in all the honour that could be paid to him, and who was determined to have all that his limited kingdom would allow, had ordered that they should remain in darkness until they should be made aware of his august presence by a signal from him as he descended from the "tube."

Presently the heavy door again opened, and the following words were borne to their ears, in a squeaking and exultant voice:

"Light the apartment; your chief has come!"

Instantly a match was applied to the wick of the swing lamp, and it cast its rays over that uncouth

assemblage, dispelling the shadows and making Luke painfully visible as he stood at the landing, a smile of triumph upon his face, his eyes gleaming wickedly. He gazed upon them a moment, and then said:

"To-night we'll be merry, eh!" and he rubbed his hands together, sneaked forward to the head of the table, and took his accustomed seat.

A demijohn and mugs occupied the middle of the table. Luke regarded them with a great deal of satisfaction, and leering at the villains around him, said:

"Belcher, how do you feel to-night, eh? Nice, ain't it? Ormsby's ruined—ha, ha, ah—and for ever—how's that?" and he stroked his chin and grinned with exultation.

"Ay, nice! Nice, did you say?" quoth Belcher, rising in his seat and glancing around. Then bringing his fist down upon the table, with a terrible oath, he continued: "I gloat upon it—'tis food, drink, life for me. I've conquered at last!"

"So ye have; now we'll live upon it, and drink upon it! Gibbons for ever, ha, ha! Boys, we've run 'em down, we've got the ace, and the pack!"

As Detective Dayton heard these words his blood boiled. With a mighty power he controlled himself, and waited for the auspicious moment.

The mugs were half-filled with that maddening liquid which they had procured from above. The men arose, and then with curses, howls and faces unearthly in their fiendish glee, they poured the burning liquid down their throats, and slammed the mugs upon the table with smacks of approval.

"Say, Belcher, wonder how Edgar feels, eh?" queried Luke, determined to raise the demon if he could.

The man leaped to his feet, and exclaimed:

"Now, look here, capin', can't you ta'k o' somethin' else; you know that alus raises the old boy with me. I want to have a good time to-night," he concluded, in a moaning tone, with an idiotic stare, and a relaxation of the facial muscles that was sickening, dreadful to behold.

With one voice the men shouted:

"Come, captin', don't snarl the fellar up, let him grin."

Luke's eyes gleamed for a moment, then he answered, conciliatingly.

"Come, we'll drink again to Belcher's good health; run her up to the brim, boys, he, he, ah!"

The men drank with a wild shout. The action of their chief pleased them; 'twas the first time he had ever condescended to bestow such a favour upon them, from his lordly position.

They talked, laughed, cursed, and drank on, and sang. Luke Gibbons seemed to forget his dignity, and jumping up, he commenced to dance, to the infinite amusement of his wild companions, who testified their appreciation of it by all manner of grimaces, contortions, words, oaths, and applause.

The rum they had drunk had not been without its effect, and they were in a state of exhilaration. Some were lying upon the table, beating time with their feet, others were talking in low, confidential tones, while the rest looked on, and in drunken good humour grinned like a parcel of baboons.

They were in a revel—every disturbing thought was swallowed up in their diabolical enjoyment—enjoyment at the sorrow of the pure, good Florence and her family.

Again they drank, and gave themselves entirely up to their revolting pleasure. They gathered together and sang songs, and indulged in all kinds of hideous diversion. Luke acted as one of them, he threw aside all assumption of command or superiority, and mingled in their words and acts. The rum and excitement had caused his face to flush, and he looked the very incarnation of fiendish wickedness.

While thus engaged, and thinking themselves secure, a storm was about to break over them, of which they little dreamed.

Silently the door of the first stall opened, very softly, and as yet unperceived.

Dashing forward, he lifted his club, and brought it down with a terrible crash upon the head of the first one he encountered.

If the floor beneath them had opened—if the very walls had walked towards them their amazement could not have been greater; it bewildered them; they stood aghast.

In an instant the truth flashed across Luke Gibbons' mind.

"Idiots! Quick, action! Furies! are you all asleep?" he cried, in a piercing voice of intense rage, at the same time touching a spring at the end of the table. It parted, and the sides came down with a loud crash, exposing to view weapons of all kinds.

"To arms! To arms! Forward, curse ye!" And with these words Luke seized a cutlass, and darted towards the officers.

"Second division to the rear—quick!" commanded Dayton, and obedient to his word, five men sprang out from the opposite boxes.

Together, with a wild yell, came the opposing parties, and the fight began in terrible earnest; the crash of club as it met sword, the roar of revolvers, and the dull, heavy sound of the officers' batons, told of determination and settled purpose.

Calm and cool among the belligerents, his gray eyes flashing fire, and his powerful frame towering above the rest, stood the detective, his well-aimed pistol and strong arm carrying destruction with each click and stroke.

The officers had the advantage, and were pressing the villains, when through the "tube" dashed twelve men, tearing their way along, with imprecations. They rushed upon the officers like tigers, and though assailed by fresh reinforcements, and contending against heavy odds, the brave men stood their ground and fought desperately.

Dayton cast his eye over the scene. It did indeed look dismal; the enemy were maniacs, and possessed of all descriptions of weapons. Still he despaired not, and clear and determined, his voice rang out:

"Third division to the left! Three rounds—fire!"

These men had been held in reserve, and though they were only three, they sprang forward towards the twelve, and nine shots reverberated through the cavern with a startling, thrilling echo, and nine of the new comers bit the dust.

"Well done, boys! Third division to the right! Second division forward! Clubs! And leaping among the combatants, Dayton laid his club about him with terrible effect.

For a few moments the battle raged hot, and with no advantage to either side. Gibbons knew that his life depended upon his success, and with staring eyes, the froth dangling from his lips, his face twisted into the most unearthly expression, and now and then emitting a wolfish howl, he brandished his dreadful sword.

And still those fearless men fought on, now surging forward, now retreating, now grappling, now evading a flashing, deathly blade, now striking away a pistol, and thus, in all its fury, the battle progressed.

All this time Dayton moved among the combatants, cool and self-possessed; his eagle eye taking in the portion of affairs at a glance, and his right hand dealing heavy blows, while with his left he warded off the thrusts that were rained upon him.

Defeat must soon overtake the villains, for their number was reduced to five, yet they fought with awful desperation, and seemed determined not to be taken alive.

With a harrowing, revolting, blood-tingling curse, Luke saw his power slip away. His hair stood on end, his eyes, like two glaring phosphorescent coals, gleamed with a lurid blaze, while his face was blue, and his teeth, as white as pearls, contrasted terribly with his discoloured face.

He glanced at the situation; he saw that destruction awaited him, and then, with a freezing imprecation, he started back, and ejaculated, in a stifled yet fearfully distinct voice:

"The magazine! the magazine! Curse ye!"

His followers seemed relieved that they were to escape the gallows, and fell back, still fighting resolutely.

As this ominous word fell upon the officers' ears, they trembled, and well they might. They glanced at Dayton, and as they saw his placid features, they were reassured, and determined, if die they must, to die doing their duty.

Gibbons threw open the iron door, and advanced into the darkness.

'Twas a moment of awful suspense and terror; at any moment the earth might tremble.

Suddenly a light flashed before their terrified gaze, and revealed the undaunted Saunders guarding the magazine, supported by six powerful policemen.

Luke tore his hair, clawed his face, while an expression of diabolical rage, fiendish mortification, and unearthly dismay contorted his features, as he met the smiling face of Saunders.

Twas an awful, yet grand spectacle.

For a moment silence prevailed. Then Saunders advanced and clutched Luke Gibbons. He writhed, he contorted, he twisted, he snarled, he cursed, he bit, but all to no purpose; he was bound hand and foot. There lay he who had so long struck terror to London and Liverpool; there lay he, the prince of fiends, hunted down at last, and within the power of the law. Meanwhile, the other four had been captured and bound.

Dayton advanced to the opening; his face wore a serene expression of thankfulness. Saunders approached. In both men's bosoms were feelings of almost brotherly love. A moment they gazed at each other, and then clasped hands over the body of the vanquished Luke. It was an impressive moment. The men on each side seemed, by sympathy, to understand their leaders' feelings, and looked on in silence.

As the two friends parted, the men could no longer repress their joy and enthusiasm, and gave three rousing cheers for Dayton, and then Saunders.

Dayton turned towards them, and in a voice choked with emotion, said:

"My friends, you are brave men! You cannot imagine how fervently I thank you for your assistance to-night. Remember, one and all of you, that Dayton is your friend."

Kindness answers to kindness in true men's hearts, and with deep feeling each man grasped their chief's hand.

"Now some of you go out and procure a cart, and carry the living to the station."

While the scenes above described were in progress, Gibbons had laid comparatively quiet. As yet Dayton had taken but little notice of him, but now he bent his eyes upon him, and ejaculated:

"Hunted down at last—at last!"

In a short time the cart had arrived, and the men, both dead and alive, were taken by the subterranean passage through Luke's domains, and thence to the street.

Dayton was the last man to leave the den. As he walked slowly along, various emotions welled up in his breast, and he continued, slowly repeating to himself these words:

"At last! At last!"

To prison the villains were taken, where Dayton examined them at his leisure.

As he bent over the person who was denominated, by his comrades in crime, as Belcher, strange memories came over him; he gazed steadily for a few moments, while his expression changed rapidly. Gradually a new light stole over his features, and starting back, he exclaimed:

"Luke Holden!"

At that moment a man at his elbow gasped for breath, and tearing his disguise from his face in like thrilling accents, exclaimed:

"Luke Holden!"

As Dayton heard that voice he turned; a paleness overspread his features, and he said:

"Charles Rowe? Thank heaven, you still live!"

They clasped hands, and for a moment both were silent; then Dayton said:

"Ah, you represented yourself as a detective?"

"Yes. I knew you would object to my participating in this struggle, if you knew it was I; consequently I disguised myself. I escaped death by an inch in Liverpool, and wished to unearth my persecutors."

Dayton thought a great deal of the young doctor, and it gave him joy to know that he was still alive.

Having placed the four persons in places of security, and where there was no danger of their escaping, Dayton, in company with Rowe and Saunders, proceeded to the chief's office.

Here, again, was Dayton received with great cordiality. His success was appreciated by the chief, and commented upon in the most flattering terms. Having gone through with all congratulations, the three friends separated.

Dayton walked hurriedly on, and in a short time reached his lodging-house.

Once in his room and alone, the remembrances, feelings and thoughts which had been crowded down by exciting circumstances, rushed full upon him. He could not sleep—it was impossible. What! sleep, when his mind was travelling on time past, and gazing with mingled feelings of joy and apprehension to the future? No, sleep would not come to his eyelids; excitement held possession of him. At first, the hours flew past, then they began to lengthen out, and it seemed as if the day would never come. Now his face seemed to melt with joy—again a foreshadowing of evil clouded his features. Anon anger rested upon his brow, and he walked the room impatiently; again a calm, serene look hovered over his features, and caused them to look kindlier and more noble.

At last the sun slowly arose above the eastern horizons. And as he gazed at the fleeting shadows of dawn, he murmured:

"Another day—what will it bring forth?"

(To be continued.)

THE UTTERLY DISENGAGED BACHELOR.—He is generally under five-and-twenty, for we do not alude to old bachelors. He dresses well, but not anxiously. It does not so much matter to him if his gloves are not buttoned, or if the parting of his back hair is not quite straight. His whole manner is that of a man who owns himself; who has no one to think of when he does anything, or wears anything, or says anything. He consorts with gay fellows who smoke a great deal, and he smokes a great deal himself. He doesn't mind owing to having been out very late last night, and being unable to find a place for his latch key when he reached home. He changes his board-

ing place frequently, and is generally ahead of his salary. He laughs at engaged fellows, and pities married ones. He is off-hand in his manner, and pays great attention in a jolly sort of way to the last new pretty girl. He patronises the burlesque opera, and goes alone with bouquets to fling to the most fascinating performer. Even there he is fickle; and the sylph with black hair, who is his idol one night, is quite forgotten the next, for the blonde in blue and silver. On the whole, he is extremely happy—he has brighter eyes, fresher lips, and nicer hair than any other kind of man you meet, and seems to have "disengaged" and "not in love" written in every dimple.

TYRON, THE SHRINE-MAKER.

BY THE

Author of "*The Black Knight's Challenge*," &c.

CHAPTER VII.

WHEN Tyron was led from the royal presence, he was conducted out into the central court, and across to the eastern wing of the palace, beneath which were the strong, sunken dungeons for state prisoners. From the extreme angle of this portion of the wandering structure, a flight of steps led to a dreary apartment beneath; and to this place the shrine-maker was taken. The pavement of this region was composed of heavy blocks of lava, set in adamantine cement; and at regular intervals appeared trap-doors of iron which opened to the vaults that lay deeper down in the bowels of the earth, each of them being secured by heavy cross-bars and stout locks. One of these traps was thrown open, and then the soldiers made ready to put forth their strength in forcing their prisoner down into the noisome place, a narrow ladder having been let down for the descent.

"Fear not that I shall resist you," said Tyron, smiling, and shaking his head, as he observed these preparatory demonstrations. "The king's dungeons have no terror for me."

The officers moved back with feelings of awe, and Tyron, with unflattering step, placed his foot upon the ladder and descended, after which the ladder was withdrawn, and the trap-door closed, barred, and securely locked.

The dungeon into which the artisan had thus been cast was small and damp, and all the light and air it received came from small perforations in the iron door of the roof; but as the upper region was itself shrouded in gloom, but little, if any, light could struggle through these tiny openings into the crypt below, though the prisoner, upon looking up, could detect dim specks, like faint stars, which told of daylight beyond. There was no food or water in the place. Perhaps they meant not that he should have any. The couch upon which an inmate might seek repose was but an oaken bench, without even a mat, or a wisp of straw, to relieve its hardness.

As soon as the dull echoing of the officers' steps had died away in the distance, Tyron took from a pouch, which he wore suspended beneath his shirt, a small metallic tube, open at only one end, and within which worked an air-tight piston. At the end of this piston was an indenture, into which was fixed a piece of light tinder; then the piston was inserted into the tube, and driven down with such force that the compression of air within the confined chamber ignited the highly-combustible material. This being accomplished the prisoner produced a small waxen taper, and ere long he had a light of his own creating.

It was some time past meridian when Tyron was consigned to his dungeon; but the hours were not to pass unoccupied. He had brought a spool of steel wire concealed in his bosom, while in his pouch he carried such trifling tools as were necessary to the bending and cutting of the material; and after a time, during which he worked as busily and unconcernedly as though he had been in his own shop, a curious fabric of chain mail began to grow beneath his dexterous manipulations. And while he worked, he spoke his thoughts aloud:

"Ah, Octavius, how little dream you of the dread powers that may be aroused by tyranny, even in the hands of slaves! Kings may glory in a crown, and they may wield a sceptre with despotic sway; but they must beware how they trample upon those rights and immunities which heaven has vouchsafed even to the brutes—the right of life and the honest pursuit of home joys and comforts! Oh, upon what trifles turn the events of human life! Upon what flimsy threads hangs the fate of kings! Octavius, where is he who set thee upon the throne of Pompeii? He has gained a march upon thee. He has fallen, while thou art yet to taste the bitter cup! Death is thy master, and he will claim the tribute of

thy life ere many more moons have waxed and waned. There is at this hour a mightier man than thou in Pompeii. Ah, Octavius, beware the Oracle, and the Priest of Jupiter!"

Tyron's features had assumed a prophetic glow, and his eyes burned with a strange fire; but anon the old quiet calm came back, and something like a smile flitted across his noble face. He worked on at his web of mail, ever and anon casting his eyes up to the iron door, to observe the dim specks of light that relieved the blackness of the lava roof. Minutes lengthened into hours, and the hours multiplied themselves, until at length the specks of light began to grow dim, and more dim, until they disappeared entirely; and then Tyron knew that night was gathering its mantle about the city.

Half-an-hour passed from the closing in of the night, at the end of which the armourer placed his work in his bosom, and commenced to pace to and fro across the narrow cell. It was not a nervous walk; but taken as a rest from labour.

Another half-hour passed, towards the close of which Tyron stopped oftener in his walk, and listened attentively, though no sign of uneasiness or doubt was perceptible.

His taper had burned nearly down to its socket, and he was upon the point of producing another, when a slight sound upon the pavement overhead caught his ear. He listened, and distinctly made out footsteps, as though of someone upon a traverse of search. By-and-bye the steps halted at the door of the artisan's dungeon, and faint gleams of light shot through the perforations.

"Tyron!" pronounced a voice, anxiously and eagerly.

"I am here," returned the shrine-maker.

"Good!" was responded from above; and on the next moment a key was heard to turn in the lock of one of the bars. Another and another lock was cast off, and finally the door was lifted open.

The prisoner extinguished the taper, and as he turned from the oaken bench where it had stood, the narrow ladder was lowered into the cell, by which means he ascended to the floor of the upper region, where he stood face to face with his deliverer.

"I had some difficulty in finding you," said the latter, as he reclosed the door, and fixed the bars and the locks as he had found them.

"No time has been lost, good Axion," returned Tyron, gathering up the loosened folds of his mantle.

The new-comer was indeed Axion, the priest of Jupiter; but instead of his usual bright dress, he wore a mantle and coif of dark gray stuff, which rendered his towering form less perceptible in the darkness.

"Have you seen Festus yet?" asked Tyron, as the priest arose from the work of relocking the trap.

"No. I have left that to you."

"Tis well. I will see him to-night."

"It is best you should; but, my brother, you must use discretion, for the king may have his eyes upon the young man, and we had better not have too much work upon our hands. I know we have the power; but we must use it moderately; and you must not subject yourself to any more such narrow chances as that which you have this day courted."

"Under the same circumstances I might be forced to it," replied Tyron, with a shrug of his huge shoulders.

"Then you had best avoid the circumstances. But I think we may trust each other."

"Aye," responded the artisan, quickly and frankly; "and we will take counsel from each other, too. I will remember your wise caution."

Axion made an affectionate reply to this, and then turned towards the stairs that led up to the floor of the palace; and when he had ascended them, instead of passing out into the court, he unlocked a small postern that opened to a rear garden, and when Tyron had followed him out he relocked it, and led the way to where a considerable stream ran under the wall, at which point they easily gained the open street beyond.

Once upon the public highway they separated, the priest taking the way towards the great Temple of Jupiter, while the shrine-maker sought the dwelling of young Festus.

Tyron walked slowly and thoughtfully on, and occasionally his meditations took to themselves words, and were borne away upon the fresh breeze of heaven.

Half the distance of his contemplated route had he gained, when his steps were arrested by the appearance of a party of the king's soldiers coming up from a narrow way to the right, and a moment's observation revealed to him that they bore with them two prisoners, both of whom were begging most pitifully to be released. Believing that none of the party knew of his arrest—or, at least, of his imprisonment—he made bold to step over and inquire into the matter.

"What is this disturbance?" he asked, stopping directly in front of the squad.

The soldiers halted, and their leader, who was one of Octavius's basest tools, gruffly and insultingly answered:

"Go about your business, sirrah. These are two slaves that have been caught in the act of breaking the law."

"What law have they broken?"

"It matters not to you, since it does not concern you."

"We have broken no law," vehemently declared one of the prisoners. "We were in the act of going home from our day's labour."

"And is not the being abroad in the public streets at this time of night trampling upon the royal edict?" cried the officer. "The king has especially ordered that when we find two or more Greeks together in the streets after a seasonable hour we shall arrest them as conspirators. There is trouble brewing among the slaves, and Octavius is determined to nip it in the bud."

Having thus delivered himself, the officer would have passed on, but Tyron detained him.

"Does the king's edict expressly declare that only slaves shall be arrested as you have said?"

"No. It is issued against the Greeks."

"And who are those whom we can even now hear travelling in the next street?"

"They are of the Roman nobility—supporters of the government," answered the officer, with parrot-like promptness.

"Nobility! Supporters of the government!" repeated Tyron, with most intense and bitter sarcasm. "Who are they in Pompeii that produce by the sweat of their brows the food and raiment that sustains and covers both royalty and nobility? Who earns the money that is squandered by your idle and thriftless Roman lordlings? Do you wonder that trouble brews when those who possess the producing bone and sinew of the state are treated like dogs? But tell me—what will the king do with these two young men?"

"Perhaps hang them."

"He dares not do that," said the artisan, as the youths uttered an exclamation of terror. "Such a hanging might be the signal for a trouble that would become gigantic in a single day. Nor do I believe that the king will dare to punish his subjects for what they could not avoid."

"Cease your babbling, or you, too, may be arrested," returned the officer. "If there be rebellion in Pompeii, as the king suspects, I doubt not that you have a hand in it. I think I heard it said, this afternoon, that Octavius had called you before him for examination."

"And is that all you heard?" asked Tyron, tauntingly.

"What farther was there to hear?" demanded the other, who, though affecting to hold the shrine-maker in contempt, yet betrayed both fear and awe beneath the surface.

"Never mind," said the artisan, with a wave of the hand. "If you must take these two helpless youths simply because they chanced to be together in the street after dark, quietly pursuing their way homeward, then do so: but when you make your report to your royal master tell him that for every deed of tyranny like this he shall surely be called to a fearful reckoning."

"We are innocent of all wrong—indeed we are," pleaded one of the prisoners, in beseeching tones. "We could not leave our work at an earlier hour."

"Then why didn't you stay until morning," roughly retorted the officer.

"We had no food in our workshop."

"Then you had better have starved. But come—I've no time to waste. And as for you," added the official, turning to Tyron, "the king shall receive your message, and he shall be informed of your dark hints; and, if I mistake not, your head will very shortly leave your shoulders. If I could have the ordering of your fate, I'd hand you over to the executioner before another sun arose."

"Vile dog, and minion of a royal villain!" pronounced Tyron, in accents that made the soldiers quiver, "beware that the rod which the king is holding over the Greeks, and which thou art helping to apply, does not fall upon the heads of those who now wield it—and fall, too, with deadly effect! He who speaks to thee knows well what he says!"

Tyron waited not to hear the foolish reply, but quickly turning, he strode from the spot, his steps growing more rapid and more nervous, as he proceeded. Short, broken sentences fell from his lips, and his hands were clenched with a mighty grip, as ever and anon he cast his eyes back towards the point where he had left the guard and their prisoners. The moon had arisen, and though her silvery beams fell not yet into the streets, yet she afforded ample light, and the shrine-maker chose his way close in

under the shadows of the houses. Numerous squads of dissipated lords and merchants were abroad in the highways, making night hideous with their vulgarity and profaneness; and many were the painful shades of emotion that passed over the strong man's face as their indecent and impious hootings fell upon his ear. Several times he turned out of his way to avoid them; for he knew full well that his artisan's garb would be sure to call forth their insulting taunts, and he desired to keep clear of angry contact with such.

Sad and lamentable was the condition of affairs in Pompeii at this time. The great mass of the people were the subjugated Greeks, whose labour was called upon to satisfy the demands of a tyrannising and overbearing patrician class of Roman blood. To labour and produce, and even to be poor, they could have borne, for they had learned to expect nothing better; but to be the mere footballs of a ruthless aristocracy; to have the fruits of their toil wrenches from them for the support of their masters in idleness, galled them to the quick—and the more because they fully realised that they had been reduced to the condition of slaves.

Slaves? Aye!—and slaves most abject. The time had come when the homes of the Greeks were no longer sacred in Roman eyes. Their wives and daughters were safe no more, and beauty had come to be a curse to the Greek maiden.

Wealth had poured in upon the Campanian city, and power had become hers; but all this was in the hands of a few, and that few had become self-willed and arrogant. In vain had the people prayed for a redress of their wrongs; and in vain had the Oracle of Jupiter warned the oppressors of the sure punishment of their iniquities. The king and the nobles were given over to lust and wickedness; and though they sometimes feared that their outrages upon popular right might breed rebellion, and though measures had been taken to prevent any such direful result, yet there was a storm-cloud gathering over their devoted heads of which they did not dream!

CHAPTER VIII.

WITHIN a luxuriously furnished apartment of a house situated near the Forum sat a young man of some four or five-and-twenty years of age. He was strikingly handsome, and his features, cast in the purest classic mould, combined with their singular beauty the unmistakable signs of wit and intelligence. His hair was of a golden hue, of flaxen fineness and gloss; his eyes blue, large, and dreamy in expression, but yet capable of glowing and sparkling under excitement. In stature he was of medium size, possessing a fair share of physical strength, through not muscular. Kindness lurked in every feature of his face, while right good will, fresh from the heart, beamed from his eyes, and lay sporting in active life about his finely chiselled lips.

Such was young Festus, a merchant of Pompeii, whose father, the elder Festus, had been dead little more than a year, and who had inherited vast wealth—a wealth which he used for the good and comfort of the poor and the needy around him, as well as for his own wants and luxuries. As we thus look in upon him we see sad and gloomy, and the richly bound vellum volume, the pages of which bore Hebrew characters, lay idly in his lap, his thumb marking the place where he had long since ceased reading. The golden lamp had been pushed away, and with his left hand he shaded his eyes from the light.

Thus he sat, entirely lost to all surrounding things, when the door of the *atrium* was unceremoniously opened, and the towering form of the shrine-maker appeared on the threshold.

"Oh, Tyron!" he cried, throwing the volume upon the table, and springing forward, "you are the man above all others I would have seen."

"Then, dear master, I am in season," returned Tyron, grasping the proffered hand with an affectionate look.

"Not master, good Tyron."

"You are more my true master now than when I was your willing bond-servant, Festus; for now that I am free to act my own pleasure, I will risk even life in your behalf, if necessary."

"Ah, my more than father, I fear I shall never be able to repay you for all your kindness to me."

"Never mind that at present, my son. Let us sit and converse upon other matters. I see you have been reading the book I gave you."

"Yes—and I have been deeply interested."

"And what think you of the Hebrew Prophets, and their God?"

"I am forced to the belief that they are right," said the youth, with solemn emphasis. "Not only does nature uphold the theory, but my own reason endorses it. There can be but one directing Power in the universe; and that Power must be omnipotent—

high above all other powers, and far, very far, removed from the passions and appetites which are ascribed to the lesser gods. And, moreover, the One Great God—the God above all gods—must be self-existing and eternal. But my thoughts become lost in wonder as I contemplate the majesty of this Great One, and I feel but my own utter littleness when I seek to measure his attributes."

"Festus, thou hast been inspired to know and understand the truth. But more of that anon. As I came in, I detected signs of trouble upon thy face."

"Aye, Tyron—a fearful calamity hath befallen me, and I would crave your help. They have stolen away my beloved Myrrha!"

"I have heard something of this. Who think you has taken her?"

"I much fear it is the king. He has spirited away her noble father, and, I do believe, hath dealt murkily with him. Oh, Tyron, can you not help me in this hour of sore distress?"

"The king's son, good Festus, went to Saxon's house, and sought by force to drag Myrrha to the palace."

"Oh, oh!"

"Hold! He did not accomplish his purpose, however; for the maiden broke from him, and fled for protection to my abode; and 'twas to enlighten thee upon this matter that I came hither to-night."

"May heaven bless and reward thee, Tyron!" fervently ejaculated Festus, grasping his friend by the hand. "You will conduct her to me?"

"I may conduct you to the place of her retreat; for she must not return to the city at present."

"Not return! Not come to Pompeii—her own city!" exclaimed the young man, with looks of wonder. "Most surely, beneath my roof none would dare to touch her to do her harm."

"You have yet to learn what a mad king dares. Octavius desires Myrrha as a wife for his son, and you may be assured that he will not hesitate to risk everything to gain that end. The good and the lovely girl is safe where she is; but she would be unsafe in Pompeii. I gave her partial promise that you should visit her."

"In the name of all the gods, Tyron, what is the meaning of this? To what pass are we coming in Pompeii when not only the sacred rights of the common people, but the immunities of the merchants, are thus trampled upon? What strange phantasy is this which has seized the mind of the king?"

"'Tis simply that the prince shall have for his wife the fair Myrrha."

"And, by heavens!" exclaimed Festus, smiting his fist upon his knee with a force that gave token of more physical power than was apparent in his mould, "he shall never have her! Never! never!"

"So I have sworn," added Tyron, calmly, but with terrible resolution.

"But what is this sudden freak of royal will?" asked the youth, when he had somewhat recovered his temper. "Upon what does he found his claim? He asked of Saxon the hand of his daughter for the prince, and the old noble refused him. Then Saxon was sent, ostensibly, upon an embassy to Argentum; and he was lost—the king says, accidentally. Of that he knows best. But why should the monarch press the suit farther? Tyron, what is this mystery?"

"I freely confess, Festus, that I know the secret of the king's strange desire in this matter; but when I tell thee that I am under a solemn oath not to reveal it, I know you will not question me farther. Of this, however, I think I may give thee assurance: He shall be thwarted."

"Be it as you will," said the young merchant, with an effort. "I cannot urge you against an oath. But yet 'tis very strange—'tis unaccountable. And that other thing, good Tyron," he continued, with sudden awakening of energy: "you promised that you would at some time tell me of my mother. Who and what was she?"

"Not now, Festus?"

"And why not now? Oh, how I am racked by doubts and vague suspicions! You say that the estate once my mother's is to wield a mighty influence upon my destiny?"

"I said so."

"Then why may I not know—"

"Hush, my dear Festus! You know not what you ask. Cherish the name of mother with reverence and respect; for she who bore you to life was one exalted and esteemed."

"Strange! strange!"

"Ah, Festus, there are things in Pompeii other than those of which thou speakest that are also strange. To-night, as I came hither, I met a party of the king's soldiers, and they were dragging away to prison two youthful Greeks. What heinous crime do you think they had committed?"

"I cannot guess."

"I will tell you: They had been later than usual

at their work. One of them I knew. He supports by his toil an aged mother and an invalid sister. They were passing homeward in the public highway after nightfall, and for this they were arrested. The king fears that a crushed people may plot against him, and to guard against such result he has issued an edict that none of the Greeks shall meet in the public street after dark upon pain of death. These two innocent youths may die by the hand of the executioner before the rising of another sun."

"Oh, that would be horrible, Tyron! horrible!" cried Festus, shuddering from head to foot.

"Aye—horrible enough. But do you think this is the sum of horror? No. All Pompeii is festered and cumbered with such blotches! The very atmosphere is diseased, and breeds moral pestilence! Can such a state of things continue? The people have rights as sacred as are those which belong to the king and the patrician; and so all have corresponding duties. Each, in his sphere, should serve some good purpose. From the king on his throne to the veriest beggar in the street, all, all, must serve some end; and all, too, are men, fashioned after the self-same image, and children of one Universal Parent! If the subjects of the king were made to be trodden in the dust-like reptiles, why were they created with hopes and fears, and with affections and loves, like other men? And why, too, did a wise God imbue them with the instinct of liberty? Aye,—and why were they fashioned with wills and powers of vengeance? We all owe allegiance to strict government; but when government runs into riot, and feeds itself upon death and destruction, such allegiance is no longer due. Drunkenness and debauchery stalk through the highways unchecked and fostered, while innocence and virtue must hide themselves away! Festus, do I not speak the truth?"

"Alas! Tyron, you do!" replied the young man, regarding the excited artisan with emotions of respect and awe. "That which you say is true—too true! But how—oh, how can it be helped?"

"Festus," continued the mysterious man, his eyes glowing like fire, and his broad bosom heaving—his voice low and terribly significant, "I had a foul excrescence once grow upon my hand. It troubled me; and I could not subdue it by medication. Wouldst know how I rid myself of it? I cut it off!"

Festus sat for a while like one riveted to his chair.

"What mean you?" he at length whispered, with a long-drawn breath.

"Didst ever hear of a man's treading upon an asp?" asked Tyron, in return.

"Yes."

"What did the reptile do?"

"It stung him!"

"And yet, Festus, how insignificant a thing is an asp when compared with men! Was not the sting of the asp fatal?"

"Yes."

"Then never tread upon one!"

"Good Tyron, there is some deep meaning beneath all this. What is it?"

"Can't thou not read it?"

"No."

"Look through Pompeii, and see how matters stand."

"I have done it often."

"I will open the scroll farther," said the shrine-maker, with a deepening cloud upon his face. "Years ago the Roman masters began to amass wealth and to enslave the Greeks; and when they had reduced the latter to a state of bondage they became indolent. More luxuries were necessary to sustain them in their dissipations, and they made new demands upon their slaves. As wealth continued to flow into their coffers they became more avaricious. With wealth and ease came idleness and arrogance, together with the worst and most brutal dissipation; and at length a fiendish cruelty marked their treatment of the enslaved ones. That tide of cruelty has reached its limit, Festus. The barriers of endurance are giving way. The Greeks have the power to stop the flood by destroying the fountain. Dost understand me?"

"Just heavens, Tyron!" ejaculated Festus, completely terror-stricken, "the Greeks will not rise!"

"Would you, Festus, were you one of them?"

The young merchant did not answer. The fearful meaning of the words he had heard was now painfully apparent, and he had no difficulty in solving the awful problem.

"I see you understand me," pursued Tyron, after a pause; "but you have nothing to fear. Were all the wealthy patricians like you, the Greeks would spill the last drop of their blood in their service and defence."

"But—Tyron—oh, this thing will not happen!"

"I have not the power of the seer, and I cannot say. And yet I fear that in Pompeii is being pre-

pared a scourge that shall sweep the tyrant power away! But time will give us to know the future."

"I see it—I see it now," murmured the youth, bending his head thoughtfully. "The dread truth cannot be hidden. But tell me, Tyron, are there yet movements towards insurrection?"

"Only such as the king and the nobles are themselves forcing on. If the oppressed Greeks rise, it will be suddenly and spontaneously."

"May the gods avert such a fate from our fair city! Oh, how terrible would be the result!"

"How much more terrible, in the eyes of heaven than are the things that now exist? Hark! Hear! Hear you that foul brawling?"

"Yes," answered Festus, as the horribly discordant sounds were borne upon the air.

"Would it be terrible to have such wretches removed from our midst?" demanded the shrine-maker.

"They richly deserve it, I must admit," replied Festus, in a forced tone.

"Then let them beware lest they receive their deserts! But enough of this. I have spoken to you as I would have spoken to no other patrician in Pompeii. Now to Myrrha. You may seek her to-morrow night, if you wish."

"Of course I wish it," cried Festus, with new animation. "But where is she?"

"Her retreat is among the ruins of Isistra."

"In so dreary a place?"

"She has comfortable quarters, as you shall see when you find her."

"At what hour shall we set forth?"

"One hour earlier than this."

"I will be ready. But," suggested the merchant, with a slight show of apprehension, "may there not be difficulty, after what has happened, in your passing the gates of the city?"

"No. You can pass without question, and I can assume a disguise that will pass me as one of your servants."

"Then be it to-morrow night, and at the hour you have mentioned. You will meet me here?"

"Yes."

Thus matters were arranged for young Festus's visit to his beloved; and shortly afterwards Tyron left the dwelling of his former master, and sought his own abode. As he passed out from the merchant's gate three men staggered by, apparently drunk, and certainly very uproarious; but when the shrine-maker had gained the street beyond them, they became suddenly very sober, and followed him, at a distance, until they saw him enter his own dwelling. And Tyron knew nothing of this. Had he even suspected that prying eyes were upon him he might have taken measures to avoid the meshes of a net that had been set to entangle those whom he had thought to protect and save.

CHAPTER IX.

THE huge gong-like alarm bell that hung upon the highest tower of the city walls, sounded heavily and gloomily upon the air, announcing the hour of midnight—a signal for the changing of the watch. The moon was up, but dense clouds obscured its beams, and only a faint relief of the gloom was vouchsafed to the sleepy sentinels. The sounds of revelry were hushed save where some wine-shop of the patrician class still held open halls: and the few nobles who were abroad staggered homeward with uncertain steps, entirely oblivious to external surroundings. For half-an-hour the tramp of soldiers sounded upon the pavements, as they went to, and returned from, their posts, and then all was quiet.

Along beneath the walls of the tombs that flanked the street of the gate of Herculaneum moved a dusky figure, with slow and stealthy steps towards the south-eastern part of the city. Anon came another—and then another—moving with the same cat-like tread, and keeping within the deepest shadows of the night. In other parts of the city, too, the same thing might have been observed. By the walls of the palace; under the shadows of the Forum; along the river's banks; beneath the deeper shades of the battlements; and through the narrow, devious ways, crept these dim spectres, and all towards one point. If they met or jostled one another, they spoke not, nor did they note anything about them, save the beats of the sentinels that they might avoid them.

It was a strange and sombre scene—these dark ghosts, thus gliding through the still avenues of the city—and one to have noticed them might have fancied them so many mystic machines, possessing only the power of slow and silent locomotion, or lonely mutes crawling away into darkness.

Beyond the great amphitheatre, around the city walls, was a rocky, gloomy spot, upon the inner edge of which, where the soil was richer, grew a thick grove of cypress-trees. It was a quiet, solemn place, seldom finding voice at night save from the breaking

waves of the sea, or from the low murmurings of the breeze that sighed through the cypress boughs. Towards this point moved the seeming phantoms of the midnight hour. One by one they passed out at the gate from which the sentinels had mysteriously disappeared, and sought the cover of the cypress grove. Hundreds of them had thus assembled, and the ghostly tide had stopped, when the moon burst forth from the curtain of clouds, its bright beams lighting up the faces of the spectres, leaving them spectres no more; but stern and stalwart men—all Greeks, and bondmen of Pompeii.

For a time after they had thus mysteriously collected not a word was spoken; but anxiously they regarded one another, and many a sharp glance was turned in the direction of the sleeping city, but the rocks and the trees formed an effectual cover, and no fear was manifest. Those were stout and stern men, with trowsers and sinews made rough and enduring by toil, and upon their dark and lowering features were fixed the signs of a resolution as desperate as it was unutterable. They stood there upon that barren spot of sea-coast like so many pillars of stone, as though awaiting some mighty shock of battle. Some clutched their hands nervously, ever and anon seeking the weapons that were concealed beneath their garments, while others—men of sterner mould—folded their arms across their bosoms, calmly awaiting the end.

At length one of the number, a powerfully-built, middle-aged man, towards whom many eyes had been turned, stepped upon a block of stone, and waved his hand in the air.

"Listen!" whispered a hundred voices. "Hector would speak to us."

"Brothers," said Hector, in tones that reached all ears, "have you performed the duties assigned you?"

"We have," replied all.

"Have you found a recreant among the Greeks?"

"No—not one," was the response.

"Then the hour draweth nigh in which the tyrant shall meet his doom! Listen to me, my brothers: We will do nothing rashly, nor out of season; but the bitter cup has been held to our lips, and we have drained it to the dregs. Where is the man of all our people who would longer endure the foul wrongs that have been heaped upon us? Is not every man, who labours for himself and his loved ones, entitled to a home? And what constitutes a home? Is it not the sacredness of the affections, and the immunities of peace and joy we have a right to expect there? What would you think of a garden that had no flowers, or a field that bore no corn? The same is a home without the flowers of affection, or the bread of common comfort. Look at our homes, if homes they can be called, and tell me what is to be found there. Are not the sweat-moistened proceeds of our toil wrenched from us, and are not our wives and little ones literally famishing for want of the things that are thus stolen from us? Ay, and worse than this—a thousand times worse—gnawing into our hearts, and cankering every thought of life—is the brutish, fiendish lust that makes common merchandise of our daughters! Shall we longer tolerate a government that only yields to us misery and degradation? But why talk of tolerating? Blacker, and blacker still, is the night that gathers over the enslaved and down-trodden Greek! Our blood is as water, and flows as freely at the will of the base and wicked men who rule us. Even the public highways are shut to us, and the Roman would deprive us of the fresh air which kind heaven breathes for us! Ye gods! my brothers, think of it!"

A low, moaning murmur arose upon the night air, and the vast assembly was moved like a billowy sea.

"Think of it!" continued Hector, the veins beneath his pure white skin swelling into dark, purple ridges. "When our daughters—the cherished flowers of our nurseries—and even our wives, are no longer ours by sacred right, what have we to live for? Oh, great spirit of heaven, that giveth immortality to the gods! shall these things be continued unto us? A dishonour ten thousand times worse than death rests upon us, and breeds foul ulcers in our social system. Shall we bear it longer?"

One simultaneous, thundering "No!" burst from the lips of the assembled Greeks. Hector leaped down from the rock upon which he had been standing, and closely, eagerly, his brethren gathered around him.

"Down, down upon your knees!" he cried.

In one serried mass those wrong-burdened men knelt about their leader, and raised their clasped hands towards heaven. The moonbeams fell full upon their upturned faces, revealing the fearful passions that burned within, and showing, upon each closed and iron-braced lip, the purpose of a vengeance as dire as it was unalterable.

"By heavens! and by the Immortal Jupiter! we must solemnly swear that vengeance shall be ours!

That we will not rest until our tyrant oppressors are stricken beneath our feet! Swear!"

"We swear!"

"And may eternal pains and torments be the lot of him who shall waver in his purpose!"

"Amen!" fervently responded the multitude.

And then, following the movements of the chief, they arose to their feet.

"Where is Athos?" asked Hector.

"Here!" replied a powerful man, stepping forth from among his companions.

"Athos, have you had opportunity to prosecute the business that was given into your charge?"

"Yea. I have gained more than I had counted upon. In my quarter are more than two thousand ready, willing men, every one of which can be armed at a moment's notice. I have moved carefully, and I know my ground."

"Well done, good Athos! And thou, Narbo—how hast thou succeeded?"

"Equally well," answered a stalwart artisan who had stepped forth to Athos' side. "There be a few among the more favoured servants in my quarter who will not rise against their own masters; but they will not betray us, nor will they seek to shield the wicked."

"How many such are there?" asked Hector.

"But very few—not more than half-a-score; and even they speak but for two or three patricians."

"Against this we will not murmur," said Hector, promptly and frankly. "If there be a noble in Pompeii who can command the love and esteem of honest men, then he is not of those against whom we war. Let such live, for there will be found but very few in this pit of wickedness. We strike not for the sake of blood; but that foul disease may be eradicated—as the leech takes blood to save life—and when we do strike, it shall be with a hand so firm, and so steady, withal, that the tyrant and the spoiler shall fall in his tracks wherever he may be."

"Good Hector," asked Narbo, "will Tyron join us, thinking you?"

"Whether he joins us or not," replied Hector, "he will be on our side, and faithful to the cause for which we work. Have you not heard how, on the night last past, he slew seven of the king's hirelings—one of them in the very face of the prince?"

"No, no. Tell us of it," cried a dozen voices.

Hector told the story as it had come to his ears, and the recital excited his hearers to wildest enthusiasm. One of their own number—who had been a bondman unto Festus—had offered his roof for protection to a victim of royal persecution, and had dared to maintain that protection even against the prince himself.

"Then Tyron is surely with us!" exclaimed Narbo.

"That he surely is," rejoined Hector. "But let us not seek to draw him into our counsels at present. Be sure he will operate best alone. He is a power of might in himself."

"Hector is right," said Athos. And to this decision all signified their assent.

"Now," pursued Hector, again occupying a stand upon the narrow platform of rock, "let us understand well the various duties we have to perform respectively; and then we will separate. Remember, my brothers, our cause is a just one, and the wrongs of years have been heaped upon us; while from ten thousand graves the spirits of our dead kindred cry aloud for vengeance upon their murderers! Be circumspect and silent, and be firm. Frighten not the insatiate beasts from their lairs of dissipation and debauchery till we are ready to strike; and when the hour for striking cometh, beware that ye shrink not, Watch ye one another, and let each remember that sharp eyes are upon him. I will not speak of betrayal from the lips of the Greek: but if any are inclined to hesitate through fear or cowardice, let them lay it to memory that in the time to come they will be held in contempt and detestation. Once more! We will be firm and true, even unto death!—Swear!"

"We swear!"

"Watch ye, my brothers, for the summons to our next meeting, and until then may the gods speed our cause."

When Hector had done speaking, he descended from the rock, and passed out through the cypress grove. One after another the companions followed in his footsteps, and as they came near to the city they separated, each going his own way, and alone.

These men looked humble and harmless enough, as they threaded their silent, lonely way through the deep shadows of the sleeping city; but in their bosoms were burning volcanic fires which, ere long, were to sweep the devoted town with a terrible purification!

(To be continued.)

BISHOP MONRAD, formerly First Minister of King Christian IX. has arrived in Paris. After the Danish

war he had taken refuge with his family in New Zealand, but the excursions of the natives, who devastated his property, have now obliged him to return to Europe.

RAIN has fallen copiously at the Cape, and the farmers are in good spirits.

THE deliveries of tea in London for the past week were 1,392,865 lbs., which is a decrease of 22,698 lbs compared with the previous statement.

FACETIAE.

A GOVERNESS advertising for a situation, says "she is a perfect mistress of her own tongue!"

NO OBJECT.—A carpenter, in advertising for a situation, frankly says that work is not so much as object as good wages.

THERE is a man, rather a facetious fellow, whose name is New. He named his first child Something, as it was something new. His next child was called Nothing, it being nothing new.

A MAN in Connecticut has invented an "improved headrest for attachment to church pews, formed by the combination of the stuffing, covering-plate, band-base plate, and springs with each other."

CHEAP MATRIMONY.—A country clergyman says he has married but one couple in a year, and that they paid him nothing, stayed to dinner, as it was a rainy day, and then borrowed his umbrella when they left, which he has never seen since.

An Irishman being asked what he came to this country for, said "Is't what I came here for, you mane? Arrah, by the powers! you may be sure that it wasn't for want, for I had plenty of that at home."

PAT'S CONFESSION.—"Patrick," said a priest to an Irishman, "how much hay did you steal?" "Well," replied Pat, "I may as well confess to your reverence for the whole stack, for my wife and I are going to take the rest of it on the first dark night."

It is now the fashion at American weddings to seat the relatives and friends of the bride on the right, and those of the groom on the left of the middle aisle. This is to see who can make the best show."

"As you do not belong to my parish," said a clergyman to a wooden-legged sailor, who was begging, "you cannot expect that I should relieve you." "Sir," said the sailor, with a noble air, "I lost my leg fighting for all parishes."

TALKERS.—Women are not so much great talkers than men after all. We frequently hear of a woman who will talk a man blind; but it must be recollect that a man once jested a great many

TALKERS.—Women are not so much great talkers than men after all. We frequently hear of a woman who will talk a man blind; but it must be recollect that a man once jested a great many

TOTALISM BECOMING FASHIONABLE.—A friend informs us that he was present at a marriage breakfast a few days ago, when the marriage ceremony was performed by a bishop, who stated at the breakfast that as a number of teetotalers were present, no toasts could be proposed. On inquiry, it was found that fourteen, in a miscellaneous company of forty persons were teetotalers.

A neighbouring farmer in a remote district of the Yorkshire wolds recently met a country rector who had been two years absent on travel. "Mr. Rector," said the farmer, "you've been to the Holy Land, I hear." "I have, John, and got safe back you see." "And what did you see there, Mr. Rector?" "Well," said the rector, "I saw Lebanon and Jerusalem, and the twelve palm trees, and the wells of water in the great desert, and we went across the Jordan, and we went up Mount—" "Excuse me questionin' you, Mr. Rector, too. But if it be a fair question, how was turmets (turnips) looking yonder?"

TWO GOOD MILITARY REFORMS.—Improving the kit, and abolishing the cat.—*Punch*.

EX NILO A GREAT DEAL FIT.—The harvest will, we trust, be a good one. Anyhow, the Crystal Palace authorities, who received 33,000 persons at the fete for which the Viceroy was lent them, will say that there is corn in Egypt.—*Punch*.

LONG STRIP OF WELSH FLANNEL.—At the Petty Sessions at Llanfaircaereinion, last week, the Magistrates had to punish Llanfaircaereionites for making disturbances in the neighbourhood of Llanfaircaereinion. Persons who live at places with such beautiful names as Llanfaircaereinion should have more self-respect, and we hope that the Llanfaircaereionites district will not again be disturbed by persons un-

for the happiness of living at Llantaffraecheinon.—
Punch.

VERY KIND.—The Spanish Cortes, we learn, has passed the budget, and authorised the Government to lay out the sums necessary to be expended for the public expense during next quarter. This is very good of the Cortes. Unluckily, before the legislature passed the budget, the expenditure did the same, by several millions. It is all very well to authorise the Government "to lay out" money—the point is to enable the Government to "lay in" that useful article, which among other slang names bears the highly ironical one of "the Spanish."—Punch.

MONARCHICAL POLICY.

According to a provincial contemporary:

"Monarch Insurance shares were freely dealt in on Thursday, at £ to £ premium."

Hence may be inferred the existence of a Monarch Insurance Company. The rate of insurance charged by that company should be high; for crowns needed to be insured must be doubly hazardous. How much would the Monarch Insurance Company take to insure the Monarch who delays crowning the edifice?—Punch.

THE PRIVATE who, in the late review, was struck by a thought, and the bystander who sat down on the spur of the moment, are both reported to be slowly recovering.—Will-o'-the-Wisp.

A POEM.

Temperance Lecturer: My very dear sir, you cannot surely know the benefits of pure spring water.

Jovial Briton: My very dear sir, if water rots the soles of my boots, what on earth would it do with the coats of my stomach?—Will-o'-the-Wisp.

TRANSMOGRIFICATION.—A proof that port wine, when aged, is no longer port. It's Madeira (made deer).—Fun.

BEARDING THE BRITISH TAR.—Our Jack Tars are relieved from the trouble of shaving. Henceforth, though at times they may be under bare poles, they will not be obliged to have bare chins and cheeks.—Fun.

DELICATELY PUT.—Fun has too high a sense of the polite to jest at the delicate appetites of the fair sex; it is but natural that when a substantial dinner is placed before them they should pay less attention to a leg of mutton than to the "trimmings."—Fun.

BY THE SAD SEA WAVES!

Ancient Mariner: You be in luck's way, sir!

Mr. Falconer Byron: How so?

A. M.: Strange in these parts I think, sir? Didn't I see you down here to these wrecks yes'day?

Mr. F. B.: Yes. Well?

M. A.: Well! Why, 'isn't every day you get a chance to see two sich bootiful wrecks as them wuz yes'day?—Fun.

Saints and Sinners.

We all of us, of course, know what "every schoolboy knows"—that Mercury was the tutelary deity of commerce, theft, and other like trades. But we imagine few were aware, until the other day, when the House of Commons called for certain returns about the Bank of England, that the money mart had a patron saint—St. Christopher le Stocks! Possibly there may also be a parish of St. Dunstan le Dividends, or St. Barnabas le Bank-Charter. It is rather too bad of the city to make the saints of the various parishes share in the business.—Fun.

ROBINSON CRUSOE'S ISLAND COLONISED.—The following bit of information will be of interest to the world over:—At a distance of less than a three days' voyage from Valparaiso, in Chili, and nearly in the same latitude with this important port on the western coast of South America, is the island of Juan Fernandez, where Alexander Selkirk, during a solitary banishment of four years, gathered the material for Defoe's "Robinson Crusoe." This island, little thought of by the inhabitants of the Chilean coastland, has lately become of some interest by the fact that in December, 1868, it was ceded to a society of Germans, under guidance of Robert Wehrhan, an engineer from Saxony, Germany, for the purpose of colonisation. The entrepreneur of this expedition, Robert Wehrhan, left Germany eleven years since, passed several years in England, served as major through the war of the republic against secession, and was subsequently engaged as engineer with the Cerro-Pasco Railroad in South America. He and his society, about sixty or seventy individuals, have taken possession of the island, which is described as being a most fertile and lovely spot. They found there countless herds of goats; some thirty half-

wild horses, and sixty monkeys, the latter animals proving to be exceedingly shy. They brought with them cows and other cattle, swine, numerous fowls, and all the various kinds of agricultural implements, with boats and fishing apparatus, to engage in different pursuits and occupations. The grotto, made famous as Robinson Crusoe's abode, situated in a spacious valley, covered with large fields of wild turnips—a desirable food for swine—has been assigned to the hopeful young Chilean gentlemen to whom the care of the porcine part of the society's stock has been entrusted, and he and his protegés are doing very well in their new quarters. Juan Fernandez is one of the stations where whaling vessels take in water and wood.

THE NODDING GRAIN.

From out the earth, sun-warm and brown,
The wheat pushed up its golden crown,
And nodded o'er the vine-clad fence,
With all a monarch's confidence,
Unto the rye, which patient sprung
The crowding stones and clods among,
Contented until now to know
It was God's gift to those who sow.

"A common creature is that rye,"
Murmured the Wheat as Wind went by,
"With tawny tint and beard unshorn!"
The swelling words across were borne;
And the fair earth, so bright before,
To the tall Rye a new look bore.
It stroked its beard with breezes light,
And wished the loves it made were white—
Wished that among the great might be
Its future life and destiny,
And like the wheat, with ruddy brand
Among the rich man's treasures stand.
Then, lo! a voice exceeding small
Came piping o'er a meadow wall:
"Why do you grumble, neighbour Rye,
That you're not wheat?"

So am I.

"Only the common orchard Grass,
Trodden where'er a foot shall pass.
But then, you see, the Maker knows,
The place for everything that grows—
For lordly Wheat, and humble Rye,
And little Grasses such as I;
So, if he wanted Wheat to be
This side the wall, instead of me,
It would have been here.

"So, I think,
All chains must have an ending link,
All clouds an edge, all hills a base;
And I, no doubt, am in my place,
And you in yours."

The nodding grain
Took courage, and grew glad again;
Assented to these words so wise,
Looked to the far, forgotten skies,
Where smiling still, the Summer sun
On the world's wheel a Summer spun.

E. L.

GEMS.

THE most abhorred thing in nature is the face which smiles abroad, and flashes fury when it returns to the lap of a tender, helpless family.

THERE are many that despise half the world; but if there be any that despise the whole of it, it is because the other half despises them.

AS there are none so weak that we may venture to injure them with impunity, so there are none so low that they may not at some time be able to repay an obligation.

MAKE not thy friends too cheap to thee, nor thyself to thy friends. Purchase not thy friends by gifts; when thou ceasest to give, such will cease to love.

THE best rules to form a young man are to talk little, to hear much, to reflect much, to reflect alone upon what has passed in company, to distrust one's own opinions, and value others that deserve it.

He that gives good advice, builds with one hand; he that gives good counsel and example builds with the other; but he that gives good admonition and bad example, builds with one hand and pulls down with the other.

TESTIMONIAL TO THE EARL OF DERBY.—A desire having been very generally expressed in favour of presenting a testimonial to the Earl of Derby:—"It is proposed to show, by a penny subscription, the wide-spread feeling of respect and admiration entertained towards him in North and North-East Lan-

cashire for his untiring energy and zeal in the Conservative cause, for his sincere attachment to the Constitution in Church and State, for his generous and benevolent exertions to alleviate the sufferings of the operatives in Lancashire during a period of unprecedented distress, and last, but not least, for his manly defence of the Protestant Church in Ireland during the recent debate in the House of Lords. Contributions from a considerable number of working men have already been forwarded to us, and we shall be glad to receive further sums, to be handed over to a local committee when formed."

HOUSEHOLD TREASURES.

HOW TO KEEP ASPARAGUS FRESH.—Stratify the cut sticks in slightly damp earth thus: First, a layer of asparagus, then a stratum of earth, asparagus again, and so on. The method is recommended in cases where the bed is so small that sufficient cannot be obtained for a dish at any one time. By storing the asparagus in the way just mentioned, that which has been cut some days is said to be as fresh as that recently cut.

POTATOES FOR CATTLE.—Immense good would result if coarse varieties of the potatoe were increased and brought to bear great yields for consumption by cattle. Some heavy bearing potatoe might be encouraged and forced so as to give still heavier crops, if the same attention were paid to them as is done to those sorts which are for human food. Potatoes, too, have a solidity in them than turnips, beets, or carrots; a less number of bushels would suffice, and everybody knows how to grow them. Five hundred bushels per acre, and ten acres consumed annually on a farm of 100 acres, would soon increase the productiveness of the whole of the land, because the manure would be so much more, as well as better in quality; besides, where the tillage is as it should be, a potatoe crop always leaves the land in an excellent state for the ensuing crop. About thirty years ago I was in the habit of growing great quantities and steaming them for hogs, the yield being between 300 and 400 bushels per acre. One year, in consequence of several acres of wheat having been destroyed by wire worms, I had an extra quantity, which I had steamed for milch cows. It happened at a time when hay was scarce, and I had these steamed potatoes mashed and mixed with barley straw cut into chaff, and the whole winter dairy cows did better than ever before. I have known them given to cattle feeding for beef, with good effect, fed raw; and though they will never take the place of swedes, &c., for cattle food, yet it will be a great end gained if a prolific kind of potatoe can be brought into use for feeding live stock.—N. S.

MISCELLANEOUS.

THE celebrated violin player, Joachim, has been appointed director of the instrumental portion of the new Conservatoire of Music at Berlin.

A DISCOVERY of "lost letters" has just been made, which is of singular interest—nothing less curious than the suppressed correspondence of Charles I. with his friends on the eve of the battle of Naseby.

FROM Lloyd's quarterly return we ascertain that there are at present 87 vessels building on the Wear, of which 41 are sold, and 46 unsold. 56 of the vessels are of wood, 7 combination (wood and iron), and 24 iron.

THE Caledonian Ball was attended by upwards of 700 persons. It was a brilliant gathering. The Viceroy was present, and heard the bagpipes; he was so pleased with the music that he has ordered a regiment of pipers. He will also put the ladies of his harem into kilts on his return home.

IT is a curious fact that the milk from a black cow is bluer than that of any other cow. The reader may perhaps smile incredulously at reading this, but it is true, nevertheless, and can no more be accounted for than the equally puzzling fact that all white cats are deaf.

STIMULANTS.—Dr. Paris, in his "Pharmacologia," relates some curious facts relating to stimulants. Hobbes drank cold water when he was desirous of making a great intellectual effort. Newton smoked. Bonaparte took snuff, Pope strong coffee, Byron gin and water. Wedderburne, the first Lord Ashburton, always placed a blister on his chest when he had to make a great speech. The great Lord Erskine took large doses of opium. On the trial of Queen Caroline, Erskine, anxious to make a great speech, took an overdose of his favourite drug. The effect was striking; he dropped into the arms of Lord Stanhope, who sat next to him.

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NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

EMILY HALE.—It is pronounced as if spelt "chinyon."

OCTAVIUS.—Consult the back numbers for the last two or three weeks.

E. PETERS.—See answer to "Octavius," in this week's number.

A DROOPING LILY.—Certainly, you have a right to the money, and can get it.

J. E.—We could not tell you without seeing the lump. Go to a surgeon.

BERTIE LAURA.—It would be better taste to return the presents, but you are not legally bound to do so.

LOUISA.—You had better apply personally at the Crystal Palace, where you will obtain the information.

BESSIE TAYLOR.—We do not know the name of the foreman. Write to the manufacturer.

MABEL.—1. Consult a medical man. 2. We would not advise you to buy the book.

COURT JOURNALIST.—The average salary in the gallery is five guineas per week.

T.—The moral contained in your verses is very good; but not expressed poetically enough to justify insertion.

BENHILL.—You did not put your first question as you have now done. We furnished you with all the information we could give on the subject.

A CONSTANT READER.—Apprentice yourself to a wood engraver. The remuneration depends upon your abilities.

A CONSTANT READER.—Your handwriting is very deficient. Take lessons from a writing master who gives instruction in bookkeeping.

A CONSTANT SUBSCRIBER.—The charity was evidently intended for those living in the parish alone; in which case you have no claim upon it.

F. M.—1. If your tale is accepted, it will be paid for. 2. Constant wear. 3. Handwriting very indifferent—practise with care.

FRANCIS.—1. We do not know the name of the manufacturer. 2. You will get the ink at any wholesale stationers. 3. Answered last week.

A CONSTANT READER.—1. At your age, we would not advise the use of dyes. 2. There is evidently something wrong with your blood. You require medical advice.

MRS. ELLEN CONNOLLY.—Write to the secretary of the institution, and state your case. We think you are deserving of admission to the benefits.

YOUNG RANGER.—Write to Mr. White, 11, Adam Street, Adelphi, London. State your trade and qualifications, and you will get the information.

J. GUN.—Order from the agent in the usual manner. A postage stamp cannot be made available for the purpose of a receipt.

H. E.—If you marry again you can be prosecuted for bigamy. You require proof of the death of your first husband.

J. G.—What is called the London season—that is, the time when people of rank and wealth reside in and visit the metropolis—commences about April, and ends in July.

E. W.—The most complex and difficult questions brought before a judge rise out of the domiciles of persons making a will. You had better, therefore, apply to a lawyer.

WASHING PREPARATION.—Put one pound of saltpetre into a gallon of water, and keep it in a corked jug; two tablespoonsful for a pint of soap; soak and wash. This bleaches clothes beautifully.

A STONECASTOR.—We are very sorry for you; but perhaps you may be alarming yourself needlessly. It is clearly a case for the advice of a medical man, and you should lose no time in applying.

TOM.—Vulgar buffoonery does not make a comedian, neither stupid practical joking constitute humour; the first is contemptible, and the second malicious and dangerous. We would not advise any young man to "go on the music hall stage."

D. W. B.—It matters little whether the indentures have been drawn up by a lawyer or not, so that they have been drawn up correctly. A master cannot compel an apprentice to remain beyond the expiration of his time to make up for time lost by sickness.

G. S. C.—Potted cheese.—Beat one pound of Cheshire cheese very fine, then add half-a-pound of butter, and beat both well together. Have ready the following spices finely pounded: one teaspoonful of white pepper, a small

half-teaspoonful of mace, the same of cloves and cayenne pepper, and five teaspoonsfuls of salt; mix these together, and beat and stir them well in with a large wine-glassful of white wine, two tablespoonsfuls of essence of anchovies, six teaspoons of flour of mustard, made with boiling water as for table. When well mixed, put into potting pots. Should this become dry with keeping, pour a little white wine over it, and let it soak in.

F. D.—The wife has a natural claim to support from her husband's property; but she cannot set aside the main instructions in his will. The case being involved, can only be distinctly decided by a solicitor investigating the details.

A. E.—Few mechanical businesses require so much labour as patience. The appliances of science resolve the actual labour into almost nothing. It would be impossible for me to advise you what trade or business to follow, not knowing either your tastes or your qualifications.

H. B. is perfectly right. The practice of putting carbonate of soda into the teapot, or, as is artfully done sometimes, into the teakettle, to baffle the vigilance of the true Bohemian, is dangerous, it being a powerful medicine, and destructive of the beautiful aroma of the herbs that cheers but not insobriates.

METEOR.—Clouds consist of minute particles of water in a frozen state floating in the air. In 1803, Mr. Howard published his classification of clouds now generally adopted, consisting of three primary forms: cirrus, cumulus and stratus; three compounds of these forms; and the nimbus, or black rain-clouds.

J. A. W.—The sufferer should refrain from speaking quickly, and avoid excitement in conversation. There is a treatise by Hunt on the subject, which we would advise you to read. 2. Keep the chest well forward, and the body erect. If it is not a deformity, by following this advice you will speedily lose the appearance.

COME WITH ME.

Oh, come with me.

I know where, deep in dusky mosses sleeping,

We shall find violets—

Grave, holy things, that seem sweet vigils keeping;

Each dainty dew-drop wets

Their nook so softly, you'd believe the dawn

And eve alike came to the bank a-wooing,

Did you not see

Above them yonder tree. 'Tis he,

The forest Hercules of might and brawn—

The oak, who wards off storm, and tempers dewing;

Holding aloft his fresh, green leafy arms,

And saying to the sky,

"You must be pitiful, for here below

My violets lie!"

Some say, I know,

The oak rejoices thus his shade to fling

Over the violets,

Making the sunshine all his own in spring,

—And giving them the frets—

Of filtered gold that through his foliage fall.

But surely, if the blossoms are so sweet,

It cannot be;

But he, yon giant tree,

Hath shadowed them, but so much as was meet,

And for his love little praise hath got.

Would you that he,

Knowing his strength, and their fragility,

Should cease to grow, that he might shade them not?

Yonder, a-flame,

The sun-flower flaunts a mass of beaten gold;

The ruddy peony

Her petals to the summer will unfold;

And many flowers will be

Unshadowed as they will beneath the skies.

Not all the flowers

Might dream out happy hours,

'Neath filtered summer showers:

But these be blest and happy violets!

And might I be a flower,

I'd choose this nook, and in its holy shade

Only too happy be,

If warding off the storms, my kind oak kept

A little sun from me.

M. K. D.

JACK.—1. You can only remove the pimples by keeping the blood pure. Take a teaspoonful of sulphur and treacle at night just before going to bed. 2. Smoking is decidedly injurious to the health; it weakens the action of the heart, and tends to soften the brain. 3. A good deal depends upon the disposition; it is better, however, that the husband should be a few years older than the wife. 4. There are too many flourishes in your caligraphy, otherwise it is good.

LEONIDAS.—Some of the Greek historians ascribe the invention of the trumpet to the Tyrrhenians, and others to the Egyptians. It was in use at the time of Homer, but not at the time of the Trojan war. First torches, then shells of fish sounded like trumpets, were the signals in primitive wars. The speaking-trumpet is said to have been used by Alexander the Great, in 335 B.C.

MILICENT.—We are sorry that a young lady should cherish such rancour in her heart. Your err is human, to forgive divine." She is your elder sister, and doubtless acted for your good. You ought to be thankful that you are happier and more prosperous. Better refrain from giving any assistance than tender it in that spirit. We trust, however, you will see the affair in its proper light, and call upon poor Martha.

BRUNSWICK.—There is, perhaps, no surer sign of folly and egotism than a constant carpings at small faults peculiar to those we love. Human nature is very far from perfect; as the finest china may have a flaw in it. You are too fidgetty and exacting, and if you persevere in what you call "wholesome surveillance," you will only estrange those whom you profess to love and esteem.

JEANNETTE.—Your brother-in-law is in the wrong; but for your own and your sister's peace of mind, we would advise you to return to your mother's house as soon as you can. It is impossible for a third person, relative or otherwise, to remain in the house of a married couple, in which wrangling or bickering is of daily occurrence, without suffering considerable inconvenience, and very prob-

ably making an enemy either of the husband or wife, or very likely of both. The dispositions of the newly-married couple do not at present assimilate; but they may live happily by-and-by, if they exercise mutual forbearance and toleration.

LOUISA G. C.—Blushing is a habit very frequently constitutional, but as frequently, if not more so, a sign of innocence than guilt. It is difficult to be avoided, but that can be accomplished by cultivating a sense of superiority in some respect or another, and a consciousness of always intending to mean well. Going frequently into good society insensibly increases and strengthens the power of self-control.

LIVERPOOL LASS.—You say that T— has obtained a special license, and wishes you to join him in London. We trust these lines will reach you in time to prevent such a foolish proceeding. We do not insinuate anything against the character of the young man; but cannot see why, if he is in such a good position, he dislikes to come down and marry you from your parents' house.

ROMANCE READER.—1. As Heilodus, a bishop of Tricca, in Thessaly, was the author of *Ethiopics*, in Greek, the first work in this species of writing, he is hence styled the "Father of Romances." He flourished, 300. 2. Dunlop's "History of Fiction," published in 1814, is an esteemed book on the subject. 3. Troubadours were the poets of the middle ages; they flourished most in France and the north of Spain.

STUDIOUS WILLIAM.—1. If we knew more of your tastes and capabilities, we would be more competent to advise. It is impossible in a life-time to get a thorough knowledge of every branch of study. You misapply the term "scholar," and are too ambitious to shine. Confine yourself to those branches of study which you thoroughly enjoy, rather than crave for many. Unless you are deeply interested in a book for its own sake, you will get very little good from its perusal. "Art is long and life is short." 2. If you send the essay, we shall be glad to give you our opinion of its merits.

REGINALD.—If the lady's pretty face distracts your attention from the sermon, select another pew from whence you cannot see her. We do not approve of writing love-letters to fair ones personally unknown to you—the proceeding is awkward, and sometimes dangerous if there is a lover, a brother, or an indignant father in the way. Better to try and get a proper introduction to the family, learn something of the lady's character, domestic and otherwise; and if you think you could be happy with her, propose in reasonable time. We have not much faith in love at first sight; the smitten one is apt to be fickle, and fond of fresh faces.

JAMES V. informs us that he has just "come into money," to the extent of a thousand pounds. He is nineteen years of age, at present a clerk in a city office, at a good salary, but with a constitutional aversion to desk work. He wishes to settle down into a quiet business, and asks if we are of opinion that the profession of a hair-dresser is an ignoble one, his taste lying in that direction, in spite of the opposition of his friends and relations, who mix in a genteel set. If "James V." has a strong taste for the business, we should not advise him to allow any question of "gentility" to stand in his way. We happen to be personally acquainted with a gentleman, who, besides being a "barber," is also a bachelor of arts, and is considered one of the most intellectual and accomplished men in a town in which there is no paucity of varied talent.

WILLIAM S. (non-commissioned officers in the army).—William S., twenty-five, 5ft. 10in., and dark. Respondent must be of medium height, fair, good tempered, fond of music and dancing. "R. M.", twenty-four, 5ft. 9in., and fair. Respondent must be of medium height, dark, and a good pianist.

NELLIE AND JESSIE.—Nellie, twenty, medium height, dark, lively and domesticated. Respondent must be tall and dark. Jessie, nineteen, medium height, dark and of a cheerful disposition. Respondent must be tall and an Englishman. *Carte de visite* to be exchanged.

B. COOKE, in a respectable position and of quiet habits. Respondent must be tall, have blue eyes, auburn hair, and a graceful figure. *Carte de visite* to be exchanged.

EVELYN F., sixteen, rather tall, fair, brown hair, hazel eyes. Respondent must be dark, fond of home, and able to support a wife. Would like *carte de visite*.

COMMUNICATIONS RECEIVED:

EMMA B. is responded to by—"Cousin Charlie, twenty-five, 5ft. 6in., dark, fond of music and home. Would like to exchange *carte de visite*.

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